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Biography

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SUNBURST



THE AUTHORSS

SUNBURST

by

LOROL SCHOFFLOCHER

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PROLOGUE

THIS book is for all who, like myself, have lived and loved, drunk deeply, danced abandonedly, sought happiness in the satisfaction of the insatiable senses—and have found only boredom and despair.

It is for you who have scanned your mirrored image and found nothing behind the perfumes and cosmetics but a hollow mask of clay ; who have felt the highball grow bitter in your mouth and the cigarette smoke without taste ; who have turned expectant ears to the drums and saxophones and heard only unpatterned din ; who have turned desperate pages of psycho-analytical lore ; who have fled from place to place, from thought to crumbling thought, and who have nowhere found answer to the insistent riddle that life lays upon the restless mind.

SUNBURST

CHAPTER I

THE CAGE

OFTEN I think of myself as entering the world like some wild bird thrust into a cage. Forming the bars of my cage was my mother's will. I remember her now, with her delicately chiselled features, as daintily tinted as a miniature in ivory, but with the firm chin which denotes determination. She wore her reddish blonde hair parted in the middle, brushed softly back and held in place by a tortoiseshell band beaded across the top in the fashion of to-day. My peace-loving father frequently teased her by calling her "Bismarck," after Germany's Iron Chancellor, although her family had come from Holland, Mother's retort was "Kaiser!"

Usually I picture her sitting in our stuffy, heavily-carpeted living-room, reading heavy verses aloud from the Bible. Through the lace-curtained window I would steal covert glances of white snow inviting me to slide and romp with other children, but my mother kept me listening in torment and impatience to the impact of words that I did not understand.

God, Sin, Sacrifice, Salvation—the words formed a terrifying sound in my six-year-old brain, without my being able to comprehend a single syllable.

Service to God and the Saviour, the thwarting of a wicked being called Satan, these were my mother's constant preoccupation. Beyond the bars of my mother's will loomed the barriers of the house itself. A six-foot iron fence thickly vined thrust warning fingers into the air, shutting out the fascinating world beyond. The red

Pullman, my restless eyes watching her impatiently as she sat quietly studying her Bible.

"Mama," a perplexing thought suddenly popped into my head, "what happens to all the little heathens that die who don't believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for their sins?"

She looked puzzled for a minute, then answered: "Well, darling, the Bible says that anyone who doesn't believe that is punished and sent to hell."

"How do you know?"

"It is in the Bible, dear."

"Well, Jesus didn't write the Bible by hand," I persisted. "And whoever put it in the book must have made a mistake. Because you told me God is love. And if God really said the little heathen children must go to hell, I hate that kind of a god! I hate him! I would rather go to hell with the other little heathen children than to heaven with such a god!"

From then on I loathed the sight of even the cover of the Bible, and felt that I could help my mother to understand things better if she would only listen to my advice. If I walked into a room and saw the Book on a table, I would either hide it behind something or walk out of the room with my lip curled in contempt. "I will marry the first boy who asks me," I would say, "so I will never have to look at the cover of that book again. There'll never be one in my home."

My father seemed gentle and romantic in comparison with my mother, who seemed to have little difficulty twisting him around her finger in spite of his six feet one. It was always he who interceded for me and saved me from frequent reprimands and punishment. This wonderful father of mine had his fads, he collected rare stamps and treatises on the subject of health. He insisted that the entire household eat graham bread, and I was nearly ten years old before I had tasted white bread for the first time. This was at a tea-party, and I thought it was cake. But his ideas about cold baths in winter, deep breathing and callisthenics morning and night, he kept largely to himself, although I was encouraged to join him. For this I have always been grateful.

Almost my first memory is of sitting in a high chair, trying vainly to reach my dish of cereal with the spoon clutched in my left hand. Mother had ingeniously fastened it by means of a ribbon in such a manner that I was unable to use it. I tried to use my awkward right hand, but the porridge spilled over my bib. My childhood seemed to be one largely of frustration.

I remember my father saying: "But Cæsar and Nero were left-handed."

"Yes," Mother replied, "but do you want 'your' daughter to become another such godless creature?"

Once when in a quarrel with the little girl next door over her refusal to share with me her tiny cooking-stove, I sank my teeth in her arm. As soon as Mother heard of this outrageous behaviour she decided to cure me for all time of this tendency, by biting my arm just hard enough to leave the imprint of her teeth. Howling, I went to my nursery, took a pencil and outlined the indentations so that I could show them to my father after they disappeared. I was four years old at that time. The pencil-marks were soon washed away, but their mark on my memory is indelible. I never bit anyone again.

One of my mother's favourite mottoes was "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Only in place of a rod she used a leather strap, which was kept rolled up on a convenient shelf. The effect of such punishment, usually administered first on one hand and then on the other, was apparently the reverse of what she intended. It only served to strengthen my natural spirit of independence and revolt.

Late one afternoon we were in the midst of one of these sessions, the cause of which has long slipped my memory. "You have to do it," insisted my mother. "I won't," was my reply.

"You will!"

"I won't!"

Taking the strap from the shelf, Mother said: "Now will you do it!" The strap stung my outstretched hand. How I wished she would coax me to say "yes," take me in her arms and let me say: "I'm sorry, Mother."

Instead I answered "No" again, biting back the tears

to deny her the satisfaction of knowing she had hurt me. I was more angry than hurt. The door suddenly opened and I saw Father standing there looking at me, his dark eyes filled more with sorrow than anger. I let out the sobs I had been suppressing and began screaming for the effect I knew it would have on him.

"Agnes, don't you realize you can't break her will that way?" my father cried.

"If you hadn't just come in, in time to spoil everything, she would have said 'yes,'" my mother retorted, her eyes flashing.

"She will never say 'yes'!" Father exclaimed, catching me up in his arms and holding me tightly against him, to my mother's disgust.

My mother's purpose was to make me "a perfect housewife." When I reached the age of twelve, and was considered old enough, I was obliged to clean my own room two days a week, the housekeeper checking up to see whether I had left a speck of dust on anything. Twice a week I had to prepare and cook two special dishes for dinner. It was many years before I appreciated my mother's wisdom and early training in the management of my own affairs.

There was little time for play or "recreation," other than the singing of hymns and listening to long discourses on the Bible and other dull subjects in the programme laid down for me. Climbing trees and other vigorous sports, playing with boys, occasional whistling, taking part in or attending plays, reading fiction unless it contained a moral and was hopelessly dull, wearing pretty clothes and trinkets, were all taboo.

When I pleaded to have my hair curled, braided or wound in curlers before going to bed, I would be reminded of the disapproval of such vanity expressed in the First Epistle of St. Peter, chapter iii, verse 3 :

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

This quotation was also applied when relatives and friends brought trinkets at Christmas or birthday gifts. Mother refused to allow me to accept them, and to my

disappointment they would be exchanged for "something else." When I was permitted to take piano lessons, they were for religious music only.

My starved love for beauty, I endeavoured to gratify secretly. In a little box concealed in my dresser drawer, I collected scores of tin rings given away on sticks of candy which I bought on my way home from school. I would slip these on my fingers, drape myself in bedspread or velvet curtain and with hair piled high strut up and down before my mirror, pretending to be some grand-duchess or actress. Yes, that was it! I would be a great actress and live in grand style in the gay city of New York. I began to tell other children that I had been born in New York and expected to go back there again some day.

In accordance with my mother's views, my clothes were of the best quality, though of course the simplest. My longing for finery caused my first (and last) theft when I was seven years old. Mother had taken me to the milliner's shop to buy me a leghorn hat. Finally she selected a beautiful one fastening beneath the chin with delicate canary-coloured ribbon.

"Mamma, can't I have it trimmed with forget-me-nots or buttercups?" I asked. "It looks so plain."

"No dear, such things are vanity."

"But, Mother!" She smiled and shook her head and my heart turned cold.

The forbidden flowers became an obsession. Every time I donned my hat their absence brought a clutch to my heart. Every time I walked in its vicinity, the milliner's shop drew my footsteps toward it like some malevolent magnet. I would stand for ten minutes at a time, peering through the window at the bunches of brightly coloured artificial flowers displayed so temptingly within. Every once in a while I would see one of the customers select a bunch and hold it next to one of the hats to try the effect. One day temptation overwhelmed me. I walked inside pretending to be "looking around" and, when I felt sure that no one was looking, edged over to the counter and slipped a bunch of forget-me-nots into my coat pocket.

I ran home with my flowers, locked them in an old steel box which Father had given me, and hid the box underneath the steps in the garden. I could scarcely wait for school to be over so that I could take them out again and feast my eyes upon them. Except for my tin rings that were round sticks of candy, they were the only ornament I owned. In the privacy of my own room I pinned them on my hat and tasted the ecstatic enjoyment of viewing my reflection. As soon as I was an actress I should have these flowers sewn on another hat. Then I would parade down the streets of New York like any other fashionably dressed woman. Hat on head, I did my school homework, every few minutes touching the flowers with my hands or looking into the glass to reassure myself that they really were there. Then, just before kneeling down to say my prayers and slip into bed, I removed my beloved flowers, kissed them passionately and returned them until the morrow to their place of concealment inside my pillow-case.

Since then I have visited the finest gardens in the world, but no Persian lilacs, or flaming Japanese chrysanthemums, or vivid Borneo orchids have brought me one-tenth the thrill of those silken artificial flowers.

At last the inevitable day of reckoning fell. A bill for the flowers I had taken arrived, and though I desperately denied their possession, my treasures were discovered and taken from me. I do not know how to describe the tragedy of their loss, but ever since my sixteenth year by way of recompense, I have had fresh flowers placed in my rooms almost daily.

"See!" cried Mother triumphantly, turning upon Father as soon as she had taken my lovely flowers from me. "At least there's no such streak in my family! Your adventurous father and all his ideals!"

This remark was meant as a jibe at my fine grandfather who had been an officer of the Swiss Guard at the Vatican, in the service of King Ferdinand of Spain, the first officer to introduce the German sword manual into the British Army in England, and a colonel in the Crimean War. The horrors of the Crimea had been too

much for his martial spirit and he had fled to America as a stowaway. He had changed his name and lived unknown as far as his past was concerned until a distinguished looking baron arrived from Switzerland in search of his brother, who turned out to be my grandfather. The resemblance between the visitor and my grandfather was so apparent that the latter was grudgingly forced to admit that they were brothers. Little by little the story of my grandfather's desertion came to light, ingeniously pieced together out of odd facts that my grandfather was compelled to admit. I took a romantic and childish exaggerated pride in being descended from a nobleman.

At nine I became firmly convinced that my mother hated me and I made up my mind to run away from home, study art and become an actress. For weeks I wheedled every penny I could until my little iron bank held fully two dollars.

It was a Friday afternoon in early winter and the newly fallen snow glistened on the walk outside like some magic white carpet leading to unknown adventure and glory. I had completed the last of my carefully laid plans. My room was immaculate. I had recited my Bible lesson creditably. I had finished my hour's practice of scales and hymns.

I had already put on every bit of clothing I could squeeze into—three sets of underwear, three pairs of stockings, four petticoats, four dresses, tan leather leggings, shiny rubbers over my shoes, my red felt coat trimmed with grey Persian baby lamb, a fur cap that tied over the ears, woollen gloves lined with silk and my lambskin muff. My pockets bulged with two extra pairs of stockings and handkerchiefs and under one arm I hugged a little package of my favourite treasures—the gold-edged black china trick mug which had stood on the marble mantel in the library and which had tiny holes near the top so that water dripped on the unwary drinker, the mulberry porcelain vase and the Dresden china box with the dainty lady plying a fan on the cover.

I took a last look at my room—the chintz-covered

ivory bed, the walnut crib in which I had formerly slept and in which my doll now reposed. The little toy bureau and chairs neatly arranged in the corner, the bureau in two shades of ivory, the straight-back chair which I had always hated; the shiny rocker. I kissed my dolls for the last time and tucked them in, took up my little bundle, dashed down the back stairs, through the side door and out into the waiting world.

As rapidly as my excess clothing permitted I hurried down town and bought a newspaper, and eagerly scanned the wants ads. under the heading "Females." Every advertisement demanded experienced help and I began to realize that I looked too young to apply. Then my eyes fell upon an advertisement for a "mother's help" to take care of a child of two, wages four dollars a month. The job seemed made for me and full of hope. I waddled the fifteen blocks looking like an animated clothes rack.

It was 4.30 p.m. and growing dark—and lonesome—when I rang the bell. Heart thumping expectantly, perspiring beneath the layer of clothes, I watched the door open and a ruddy-faced maid appear.

"I saw this ad. in the paper," I began, when I noticed the maid staring at me in such evident amazement that I felt my opportunity for independence fast melting away.

"Land alive!" she ejaculated.

I was ushered into the presence of Mrs. William James Dougherty, a kindly-faced woman of about my mother's age, who looked at me for almost a minute out of sympathetic brown eyes before speaking:

"What can you do?" she finally asked.

"I am a good housekeeper, and I expect one day off each week."

"All right, my dear, Jenny will show you to your room where you may take your things off."

The room was occupied by Mrs. Dougherty's mother-in-law. The closet and wardrobe pleased me immensely, but I dreaded the prospect of undressing before an old woman. The moment I was left alone, I began peeling off my surplus clothing and putting it neatly away. By

the time I had finished and washed dinner was ready and I dined with the family.

Everything about the dining-room delighted me, but particularly the thin glass tumblers, etched near the rims, and so much more elegant, to my notion, than the heavy cut-glass tumblers at home. There was such a charming air of informality and humorous good nature that I felt immediately at ease. To my surprise, "grace" was not said and, unlike my parents, the Doughertys kept up a constant stream of subtle jokes and laughter. In answer to numerous questions, I told them that my name was Viola Comstock, that my parents were dead and that I had just come from my grandmother's home in New York. Mr. and Mrs. Dougherty smiled and covertly exchanged glances. All through the meal I had golden visions of saving my four dollars a month until I had sufficient money to study art, go to New York, and become an actress.

After spending the following morning assisting the maid to tidy the house, I asked for the afternoon off, a request which Mrs. Dougherty received with a surprised look but readily granted. I promptly streaked off to one of the department stores where my mother had a charge account and ordered everything that I considered a well-dressed housemaid should have: two black dresses, eight white aprons with bibs, a bright magenta red silk blouse with long sleeves and lace cuffs, three caps, twenty pairs of wool stockings, a blue skirt, a red leather purse, three dozen handkerchiefs, five suits of underwear, a box of face powder with a swansdown puff, a bottle of vivid French vinaigrette rouge, a bottle of Lily of the Valley perfume and six pairs of woollen gloves. My explanation that Mother had sent me for these articles was accepted without question.

With heart singing I stole into the house and tried to undo the bulky package without rattling the paper. Then, when I had put the last garment away and changed my clothing, I made my appearance before Mrs. Dougherty, resplendent in long black dress, white apron and cap.

"Well," she said. "Suppose you try to set the table, Viola."

My heart leaped with joy. So far I had not even seen, much less taken care of, the two-year-old child mentioned in the advertisement. Now, at last, my ability to do real housework had been recognized. The door-bell rang and, eager to display my best manners as well as my new maid's costume to the caller, I asked :

"May I answer the door?"

"Certainly, dear."

I ran to the door and opened it, and there stood—Mother—in the long Persian lamb coat I had always admired, hands in her muff, accompanied by Aunt Margaret, Father's sister. Mother's eyes looked sadder than I had ever seen them before.

"Oh, my dear!" was all she said.

Fearful to find my brief dreams so unexpectedly shattered I cried out: "How dare you come here! If you think you can take me back, I'll run away!"

Mrs. Dougherty's voice broke in:

"Bring your friends in, Viola."

Mother replied haughtily: "I am her mother, and her name is not Viola!"

"My dear, would you go and see if baby's all right?"

Mrs. Dougherty came into the reception-hall, but I lingered there while the three women talked, picturing myself as a princess whose dream castle had suddenly crumbled.

"I knew she had run away," Mrs. Dougherty was saying. Then there was something whispered about the "glint in her eyes" and "I wouldn't try to force her."

Impulsively Mother turned to me, arms stretched out.

"Your father is almost insane with worry," she said.

"That's more than you are!" I retorted.

"My dear, how can you say that?"

"Well, I'm happy here. I want to stay—and I will stay unless Mrs. Dougherty refuses to allow me. And then I'll go where I can't be found."

My mother stood absolutely speechless for almost a minute, her beautiful blue eyes baffled.

"Very well," she said finally, adding almost as an afterthought: "Your father will be frantic." She leaned over, put her arms gently about me and kissed me good-bye.

In the middle of dinner the door-bell rang again and my tall, distinguished father was ushered into the drawing-room. As soon as I entered the room he caught me, swung me up in his strong arms and kissed me many times, then set me down again. "You're coming home with me, aren't you?"

"I will never go back to that house again!" I answered. "I'm tired of prayers, and here there isn't someone always telling me not to do this or that. Mrs. Dougherty loves me and if you don't spoil it . . ."

"Remember, you are my eldest daughter," Father interrupted. "I expect much of you. You must go back to school. You must be something better than a house-maid. Don't you miss me?" There were tears in the corners of his eyes.

He sat down in one of the large stuffed chairs and I suddenly climbed up on his lap, buried my head in his shoulder and began to cry. He patted my head and said: "Do you remember that engraved gold watch you wanted and the gold ring? You may have them, if you come home with me and be a good girl. And, I have another surprise."

"No!" between sobs.

"That tooled leather book-bag you asked for. And, don't tell a soul, but I have been looking at the prettiest Persian lamb coat with new muff and cap to match."

"Daddy!"

"Yes, and a bracelet with an elephant bangle."

I did not wait to hear more. This was too good to be true. Forgotten were my dreams of New York and the stage. I ran to my room, packed my things, flew into my red coat and crushed my fur cap over my "curls," forgetting to tie the ribbons beneath my chin. Clutching tightly my father's big buckskin glove, I marched from

the house. I could hear the impatient stamping of the horses' hoofs while my handsome father tucked me carefully under the fur robe.

After that Mother tried to be more sympathetic. I was allowed to keep the perfume and the red purse.

CHAPTER II

FRUSTRATION

SCHOOL proved as obnoxious as ever. The very thought of it threw a shadow over my spirit . . . an institution overtaxing all patience, where I had to listen to dreary, unpleasant teachers who snapped at me for asking questions when the answer was most necessary . . . a place where I was forced to hold my copy-book straight in front of me and trace up and down over printed words with the aching fingers of my right hand, when I could so much easier turn the book half-way round or almost upside down and write with my left hand. . . . A prison where we all filed in and out like prisoners—out again with a tedious lot of homework, hateful problems to figure out at home or be considered stupid if the answers were incorrect, half the time our fathers failed to solve them. . . . A prison from which revolt against the inhuman system was quite impossible or only led to worse scenes at home on occasions when, refusing to be talked to harshly, I deliberately walked out, books and all.

During only a few comparatively brief periods, in fact, did school ever interest me. The first time was at the age of seven, just before I was introduced to its mysteries. Another time was at the age of nine when I discovered that I could escape toiling over my loathed homework by pumping my class-mates for information. Thus primed I would receive the highest marks—higher than those of my studious informants.

The third time, at the age of fourteen, my interest in learning was so aroused that I announced to my horrified parents that I would go in for law.

“What! Enter a man’s profession!” they exclaimed.

"Do men own the world!" I cried. "What difference is there between us!"

What interest had been roused in my studies through the efforts of tutors was at once killed. A peculiar nausea for study of any kind overwhelmed me. The last year of high school became such a nightmare that I had to be tutored on a curriculum diluted to pet subjects administered by a very patient, sour-faced "*old man of thirty-five*," whom I induced to do all the talking by means of an avalanche of exhausting questions. By this comparatively painless method I soon acquired all the answers.

Another time my interest in school—a collateral interest I admit—had been aroused and shattered. I had become enamoured with all the ardour of puppy love with a tall, grey-eyed lad of eleven, Ward McGill. For one blissful school term he had carried my books to and from school, and had written impassioned notes, which I answered with equal ardour. He brought me bags of candy and gave me little trinkets. Then one day we learned that our parents had decided to separate us by moving to different parts of the city. We sat silently on a park bench, holding hands and crying. For years I mourned for him in the approved fashion of the heroines of the novels in which I now found consolation.

One of my literary idols was Ethel M. Dell.

I discovered the copy of Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter*, which I had previously been forbidden to read, and in the secrecy of my room I lost myself in the imaginary sufferings of the Hester Prynne, the soul-torn minister, and their child. Thereafter, secretly, because all fiction was still taboo, I began losing myself at night in the imaginary worlds of the novelists, whose works I smuggled into my room with precocious ingenuity. Indiscriminately, because my reading was absolutely unguided, I devoured with equal relish literary masterpiece and paper-back thriller.

For nearly four years this lurid fiction led me into a fresh realm of love and romance. The closer the bars of my cage pressed, the farther my imagination soared on its new-found wings. My world became peopled with dashing princes, gallant soldiers and misunderstood

daughters of harsh parents. And always the story ended with lovers meeting and marriage. Always love triumphed. Love!

Religion, education, my filial duties became as shadows. My dream world alone was real. One primal force illuminated my universe. Piercing the clouds of existence, shone the bright sun of romantic love. Its brilliant rays fell into my narrow cage, transmuting each bar into a glittering strip of gold, and I held out impatient arms to its life-giving radiance.

Every step in my education—an education of frustration, compulsion and finally romanticism—prepared me to rush blindly into my first marriage at the age of sixteen.

It was summer and life seethed in my veins. I had made up my mind to marry the first boy who asked me, so that I might escape from this cage of my childhood.

Edward looked as though he might have stepped from a drawing by Charles Dana Gibson—with his tall, slim figure, his clean-cut features, brown hair and dark eyes. I watched his nonchalant movements from a corner of the room with wistful eyes, my interest heightened by whispers that he was “nineteen years old and already a ‘man of the world’!”

Amelia spied me and, laughing, brought him over to me.

“Why so quiet? I’m afraid you’re not having much fun.”

Then after introducing us, she ran off to join another group. Almost his first words were: “When may I see you?”

“But you are seeing me.”

“Oh, I mean alone—at your home.” His dark eyes and fine etched lips insisted.

“My parents won’t permit me to have callers—yet.” I met his look despite blushes. “I’m only sixteen.”

“You look eighteen!”

“Anyway,” I went on impulsively, “I won’t be here long. I’m going to New York and go on the stage!”

“Really!” His dark eyes seemed to devour me.

"I never met a girl just like you. I believe you would become a star overnight. We must meet somewhere alone." He pressed my hand and my heart pounded frantically. A rendezvous for the morrow was arranged.

For the next three weeks we met secretly every evening at sunset—usually in the park, sometimes at a girl's house, until one day he pulled from his coat pocket a tiny velvet box and opened it, disclosing an old-fashioned heavy gold ring set with diamonds.

"It was my mother's engagement ring." His voice was husky with emotion.

Silently he took my left hand and slipped the ring on my finger.

"I'm not going back to college. I've been offered a job in a broker's office. Let's get married!"

That night when Edward, his hair brushed to a Gibsonesque perfection and his clothing freshly pressed, appeared to stammer out a speech which he had evidently carefully prepared, Father met him head on:

"... the idea of a daughter of mine marrying at the age of sixteen," he thundered. "Leave this house at once and never return!"

But, much to my surprise, Mother interceded.

Eventually she induced Father to yield, on the express understanding, however, that after our marriage we should live with them until I was twenty-one years of age.

Blissful days followed—of preparation—the wedding—and then swift tragedy. Edward's mother died, bringing to me my first contact with death. His filial affection turned to my mother who readily won him over to her theories of religion, morality and woman's place in the home. Edward, however, insisted on spending most of his microscopic income on baubles for me, much to Mother's disgust.

Ever since my marriage I had looked forward to seeing my first theatrical performance—the local stock company's production of *Romeo and Juliet*. I expected, of course, that my husband would accompany me. But when I suggested it to him, to my amazement he gave me a horrified look: "Only worldly people go to the

theatre, and have you forgotten that my mother is dead?"

"Oh, that's just my mother's idea, and it's only an antiquated custom to stop going to places because people die," and I stamped my foot. "And besides, this is Shakespeare!"

"But now I see things differently."

Tears of vexation filled my eyes, but I brushed them angrily aside. For months I had dreamed of attending theatres as part of my new freedom as a married woman. I would not be cheated now!

The next afternoon I slipped out of the house and saw my first theatrical performance. I had read the impassioned lines over so often that I seemed to know them by heart. To hear them uttered now by these dream characters suddenly come to life seemed like entering the seventh heaven. The scenery was rather worn and faded, for the most part adapted from the settings of other plays. None of the actors ever reached stardom. But, although I have seen all the great Shakespearian actors since then, no subsequent performance has ever touched the depths of my soul as did my first play. For the first time in my life I beheld the magic world that breathes behind the footlights, the golden world of romance and fancy and dreams come true. Here was the real love I craved in the immortal story of these two great lovers.

I returned home in a daze and when I heard Edward's footsteps come up the walk and his hand on the door-knob, I ran to him, still glowing with my vicarious experience of love.

His face was black with fury.

"Where were you this afternoon?" He disregarded my outstretched arms.

Taken back I answered: "Nowhere!"

"Little liar!" he cried, his lips set firm, his dark eyes blazing. "Goddard's fiancée saw you simpering over that *matinée* idol after I forbade you to go!"

"How dare you forbid me!" My disregarded love flamed and I shook my clenched hand in his face.

"I'll teach you who is running affairs!"—he brought

CHAPTER III

WINGS SPROUT

ABOUT seven o'clock the next evening I was speeding to New York and freedom on a Delaware and Hudson Railway train. Sixty-five dollars, obtained by pawning a ring and a brooch given me by my grandmother and Edward's mother's engagement ring, had enabled me to buy a railway ticket, to have my hair waved and to purchase a picture hat, a red leather purse, two pairs of French silk stockings with clocks and a pair of suede shoes with high heels.

Devouring a breakfast of hot cakes with maple syrup in a Forty-second Street restaurant the following morning, I watched through the window the fascinating stream of life, of which I now was a part. Street cars clanged past. But sweeping through all other impressions and forming a moving background for them was the incessant flow of people—hundreds of them—thousands of them, carried along by the restless electrical current which was drawing me also.

Into this stream I merged, staring at every theatre and shop front and up to the peaks of the cloud-scraping buildings, Times Square newsboys shouting unintelligibly about some sensational murder trial.

On the traffic-rocked corner of Broadway and Forty-fifth Street, I had come within a hair's breath of being run down by a speeding motor car. Instead of terror I experienced for the first time in my life, a feeling of security and protection.

At Forty-fourth Street and Broadway I felt myself drawn like a bit of iron to a magnet into the Astor Hotel, where I registered as Viola Clayson and was soon ensconced in a magic room that overlooked the whirling canyon of Broadway four stories below.

Down in the lobby again, I found myself smiling into the face of a curly headed brunette, apparently four or five years my senior and to all appearances a show girl.

"First time in New York?" she smiled and suddenly held out her hand.

"Why, yes."

"Well, I know how you feel. Come—let's sit down and talk things over. My name's Clarice." She led me to one of the low sofas and almost before I knew it, I was pouring out my life story while she listened with sympathetic nods and unabashed patting of face powder on her nose from a dainty hand-bag.

"So you want to go on the stage? Well, to-night I'm invited to a supper at the Lamb's Club—you know, the actors' rendezvous, and you can come along. You'll meet lots of people. And maybe we can fix it up for you. I'm doing a bit myself in a comic opera."

In joyous bewilderment I listened to this unexpected announcement that the adamantine door to fame—the stage—was miraculously swinging open to my touch.

"Come with me to my hotel, it's only two blocks away, I have a gown I think you can wear. We're about the same size. It's crushed strawberry pink and very *decolleté*, and you can take my sequin bag."

That night, my first in New York, I floated like some enchanted Cinderella in a dream down the flaring White Way with its night-defying signs, first to the Lamb's Club, then considerably later to a restaurant on Sixth Avenue. Great names of the theatrical world turned here into living men and women—Marie Dressler, Ethel Barrymore and David Belasco.

The next day the dream continued when Clarice took me to the theatre, through the stage door, up the circular stairway to the dressing-room. I watched with keen interest the mysterious rites of make-up and smoked my first cigarette, holding it awkwardly between thumb and finger.

"I think I've found a job for you," said Clarice as she removed the smear from her pretty face. "'The Great Mysto' at Keith's needs an assistant. It's a disappearing act. All you need is looks. In the finale you

dress like Columbia—you know, with an American flag draped around you. And you disappear in the trunk mystery."

For two weeks I assisted Maestro faithfully, appearing in silk tights and an American flag in the final tableau and, together with another girl, appearing and disappearing from a box after it had been carefully padlocked. A black velvet backdrop covered the entire rear of the stage, so that by pulling down a black velvet curtain in the box and hiding behind it the audience thought it was looking through the bars into the empty box to the back of the stage. My picture, in Egyptian costume and with eyes over-emphasised by mascara, was prominently displayed on the bulletin board before the theatre. And, for this fascinating stunt I received the enormous sum of twenty-five dollars a week.

By the end of two weeks I was bored to death. The constant repetition of posing as Columbia and crouching behind the black curtain when I was supposed to be invisible palled on me. After all, this was not really acting!

Clarice laughed when I told her I had quit.

"Well, I don't know that I blame you. My show's closing soon and I'm looking around myself."

The next morning at nine o'clock Clarice came tearing into my room, all excitement:

"I think I've found a job. Come on, let's hurry and doll up!"

We rushed over to an office building on Forty-second Street climbed three flights and flounced into a stuffy little waiting-room almost filled by at least a dozen actors and actresses, their faces badly made up, overdressed and volubly exchanging experiences in Broadway's version of Oxford English. Photographs of stage celebrities covered most of the sooty calcimined walls. Presently a yawning young man, with beaked nose, appeared in his shirt sleeves and greeted Clarice with disconcerting familiarity.

"And who's this?" he asked, turning his sleepy black eyes upon me.

"A little girl friend."

"Any experience?"

"Sure. She's played in stock," Clarice glibly prevaricated.

"Is that so?" He stuck a cigar which he had been holding in one hand, into his mouth, cocked his head to one side and looked me well over. For the occasion, I had donned a vivid green hat, rather close-fitting delft blue suit, white fox fur and Clarice's green bag. The ensemble was an imitation of the regalia worn by the then best dressed show girl on Broadway, only instead of paying one hundred and fifty dollars to a *couturière*, I had bought my suit for forty dollars at Macy's.

"Well," said the young man, "let's see you walk around."

I strutted up and down in the queenly manner of the show girls I had seen.

"You'll do," he said. "Show up to-morrow morning at ten."

Overjoyed that I was to become an "actress" at last, I decided to move into a suitable apartment, which I had discovered I could maintain by an ingenious device I learned from the other little salamanders. As the orchids, violets (out of season) and gardenias arrived from admirers, I hastily returned them to the fashionable florists, who deducted their percentage for delivery and overhead and returned a large portion of the cost of the flowers to me.

In Fifty-fifth Street I found just what I wanted—two rooms and bath. The rest of the day I spent in shopping, principally at Macy's for the embellishments I believed an actress' apartment required—a bird-cage, a canary, two Chinese vases, downy cushions for the chesterfield and a set of hollow-stemmed glasses. These furnishings were imitations of the decorations I had seen in the apartment of Irma Collier only the day before.

Irma Collier was one of Broadway's reigning beauties. I had met her at the Waldorf following the Beaux Arts Ball. Our suite adjoined hers and as we went down to the ballroom her party joined ours. Every man we passed gazed in open admiration at her statuesque beauty.

The glamour of the names in our own party made my blood tingle—a Senator, a star athlete, two Wall Street millionaires and a young scion of New York's most ancient lineage.

Irma Collier was the most beautiful creature I had ever seen—with her skin as colourless as ivory, her startling red mouth, her alabaster forehead, exquisitely chiselled nose, square chin and glossy, thick chestnut hair which she wore in a coil around her head. We met later at the Lamb's Club and she invited me to visit her.

When I called a few afternoons later, a coloured maid ushered me into what impressed a sixteen-year-old girl as the most fascinating apartment I had ever seen—all in shimmering silk drapes, lacquered chairs, rare Chinese *jardinières*, vases filled with long-stemmed American beauty roses, bowls of rare goldfish, a graceful satinwood cabinet—all delicate, feminine, exotic.

A moment later Irma appeared in an exquisite chiffon *négligé*, trimmed with Kolinsky. She immediately ordered her maid to open a bottle of champagne, which we sipped from exquisitely slender-stemmed glasses.

"Here I am, drinking champagne with Irma Collier," I kept thinking. What would they think at home? No, I would wait until my name blazed on Broadway before I would write. And if I failed—fantastic thought—they should never hear from me.

A few days later, now that I had my own apartment, I decided to call again on my new friend and invite her to a party. My face very white and lips rouged exactly as I had seen hers, I set out to pay my call. A few houses away from her apartment, I was suddenly aware of a group of people gathered on the pavement and then of a casket being borne down the steps to a waiting hearse.

"Who is dead?" I asked the nearest person.

"That's Irma Collier," the man answered. "She shot herself last night. It's in the papers." He added the final sneer against her immorality in words so unmistakable that I realized that all her dazzling luxury had been

but the spoils of my adored *demi-mondaine*, and I thought she too had manoeuvred it with orchids !

For the next three months I led the life of the typical Broadway show girl. A succession of admirers, wealthy, sophisticated, purposeless, hilarious gaiety. Each day I spent hours at beauty *salons*, *couturières*. I learned how to hold wine-glasses and cigarettes with subtle allure. I learned to rattle off the meaningless babble that wine induces and gay companionship stimulates. And I learned a little about men. But, more deeply, I learned the emptiness of the life of pleasure.

Meanwhile, my youth and vivacity had been brought to the attention of Belasco, then at the peak of his fame as a producer. At Mouquin's one night after the show, David Belasco leaned across our table to address my companion.

"Look over there to your right ! " he indicated with his head two tables away, where Mrs. Leslie Carter was seated with her back to us. Then to me :

"If you would follow my advice, in two years I could make you a second Mrs. Carter."

For some reason that nobody else could fathom and which I could not see clearly at the time, Belasco's offer left me cold. My table companions straightway declared me insane.

Two years of training would bring me what ? A dramatic career ? An endless round of "repetition" — the one thing I could not endure !

Had the moving pictures, where one slaves for months on end toward a definite goal, attained their present recognition as a medium of expression of dramatic art, I would have hitch-hiked, had it been necessary, all the way to Filmiland.

A few weeks later, to everyone's astonishment, I announced my intention of turning my back on Broadway ; I returned to my home in a little red-feathered hat, a smart tailored suit with a gardenia pinned to the lapel. In my new trunk were enough gowns to allow me a different one every night for a month.

My adorable father met me at the train and I sat in his lap, my arms around his neck all the way home.

Suddenly I was the little runaway girl whose Daddy had come to take her home seven long years ago. How happy I was to see my beautiful mother again! I was greeted with tumultuous joy by my little sisters and brothers, in whose eyes I had become a real live heroine.

With new-born zeal I decided to enter college and continue my education regardless of my intense dislike for routine. After a short period of intensive tutoring I enrolled, hoping to obtain a degree in my beloved law.

Two years of intellectual goose-stepping proved the futility of attempting to cram an impetuous spirit into scheduled classes, quizzes, lectures, examinations.

Had I been born considerably later I might have been fortunate enough to attend Rollin's College, at Orlando, Florida, an institution where lectures and individual instruction are co-ordinated so as to foster creative thinking—the one thing I vainly sought during my school days.

Again at Chevy Chase, Maryland, about three miles out of Washington, D.C., I might have found Dr. Stanwood Cobb, a modern educator, conducting a school where the creative individuality of the child is really brought out and character moulded during the impressionable years—the years that Professor Stanley Hall described as those when what a child is taught is like engraving upon stone.

I have since discovered that many so-called delinquents at school, even those considered under par, are often touched with genius. Some whose later careers proved brilliant laboured under a sort of nervous complex, an extreme sensitiveness to censure or criticism, and what often appeared as a lack of the confidence exhibited by their more aggressive brothers and sisters. Many of those who graduated with the highest honours had souls like adamant, but memories which enabled them to cram down the facts like a bulldog devouring meat.

I soon found that the educational mill called college was not for me—that it was far removed from life, too massive and highly geared to concern itself with me as

an individual or with my problems. I then selected short extension courses in fields that particularly interested me instead of binding myself like a slave to the semester's grind. I sought additional outlets for a spirit that formal schooling only fettered.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT NOW!

MY ensuing quest for pleasure, the flight from monotony, led from one blind labyrinth to another. Social life held no more escape from boredom than had Broadway. Life seemed without savour or meaning.

Frivolous flirtations became the centre of my world for the next ten years. I had become a pursuer of shadows.

Then one day, when my heart seemed as chilled and brittle as the leaves that fell before my window in the autumn wind, came the crisis.

To know how I felt on that November day you must imagine yourself a sophisticated woman of twenty-six, staring into her mirror, seeking vainly for the reality behind the mask of clay.

The face I scanned looked flushed and attractive—like the features of Dorian Gray, only upon whose painted portrait was the soul's disintegration marked. But I bore my portrait within. A Kolinsky-trimmed chiffon wrap clung to my figure. Only last week the fashionable Viennese painter, friend of Louis Bonaparte, had called the lines of my body "Immortal," but I was too bored for vanity.

A thin trail of smoke rose from the cigarette in my hand and the last night's emptiness came back to me—the drinking, the dancing, the flirtations, the music.

It had been a cocktail party, the host, thin, distinguished-looking, foppishly immaculate and fifty—the crowd "Bohemian." Out of the sixty or seventy men and women who had been there, the faces of a few drifted between me and my studied reflection; a small, dapper French consul, pursuing a dozen women with Gallic

dash: an heroic-sized blond Swedish consul who insisted upon plying me with his native "Schnapps," and who had a quick eye for the ladies. A handsome yellow-haired Russian actor, reclining on the floor, surrounded by a bevy of women who were leaning on their elbows listening adoringly to a rehearsal of his newest role. Twenty-two-year-old Yasha, who had escaped from the Russian Revolution with a fortune sewed in his underwear. The Polish artist who sang in a melting voice.

My thoughts burned dully and my brain throbbed, as last night's memories and to-day's gloom whirled about me and overwhelmed me with a feeling of despair.

I had been awakened this day by the grandfather clock in the hall chiming noon, and had become conscious of the surrounding confusion of mind and last night's apparel flung carelessly over the chaise-longue. The noon sun fell in dust-mottled strips of light upon the dressing-table, causing the perfume bottles to sparkle. In a reseda green vase tea roses drooped. Leaves were falling before my second-story window. A shower bath, an hour's roaring torture of having my hair finger-waved and dried, taking in a movie with gay little Edith, the wife of the District Attorney. Back to my room to dress for dinner.

I looked at my black Chanel chiffon and lace, but its Parisian lines evoked no thrill. I sank down on the bed. The dusk had deepened outside and in the electric light the beige rug seemed suddenly to have turned to sand. Automatically I lit a cigarette. There was nothing more important than this sand. I was not going out to-night. My life was just this yellow dust and driftwood.

Love had proved a rope of sand, my career, a shifting waste. Belasco's enthusiastic prophecy, "I will make you a second Mrs. Leslie Carter," ran through my head. Wind-strewn sand, monotony, repetition, my education fitting me only for what is known as society, those endless rounds I detested. Sand, beige, driftwood.

Outside the street lights blazed into life. Tears began to stream down my face. What is there to live for?

I had made up my mind. Throwing a mauve chiffon about me, I sank down upon the chaise-longue. I wept.

"God, I cannot go on this way. I have come to an end—the end of everything."

I rose, walked swiftly to my dressing-room and into its mirrored glare. My hand sought the cabinet handle and pulled open the glass door; my eyes travelled from bottle to bottle, seeking one label. I closed the door. I stared into my face in the mirror, searching for the hidden self beneath the inscrutable mask. Deep within the lustrous brown eyes I saw only a mockery that I must end. Clutching the bottle, I opened it.

I felt myself enveloped in a cloud of fear, doubt, dark premonitions. The "Why" of life befogged me. Logic, the law of cause and effect, the purpose of *being* fought with the instinct of death. Suddenly in the far-off centre of this elemental struggle I heard my own voice: Every effect must have a cause! Every created thing has its purpose! I was placed here for some divine reason! My hand trembled and fell. In the distance I heard the crash of broken glass. Far down at my feet I saw through the now clearing haze the shattered bits. The beige mood fell, like a cast-off robe, and I was talking aloud to my God. "Help me, O God!" I was walking back to my room. "Show me the path, give me the power and I will serve You."

Convulsively I wept. Relieved in mind for the first time in many months I went to bed, not to awaken until the following afternoon. I knew that my prayer would be answered. I knew that I was to devote the rest of my life to the limit of my capacity in service for humanity.

When Steinmetz, "the wizard of Schenectady," was asked to name what he considered the greatest force in the universe, he replied:

"On the day that the power of a fervent prayer can be measured by instrument, the greatest force in the universe will have been discovered."

In my own life the words of Steinmetz proved literally

true. I had found God, and I determined to learn more about HIM.

Twenty-four hours after my prayer there occurred a seeming coincidence that changed my entire life and eventually gave me the power to fulfil my sacred promise to God.

CHAPTER V

DESTINY POINTS A FINGER

THE day after my "experience" I was still overwhelmed by implications impossible to express in mere words. I was eager to learn about the new life I had intuitively glimpsed—to study—but what? That Saturday afternoon I emerged from a bookshop with a copy of *In Tune with the Infinite*, by Ralph Waldo Trine, in my hand. I decided to call on an old friend who lived a few blocks uptown. There I was introduced to a fine-looking Irishman, who determined that we all go to the Ritz for tea.

As we entered the lobby he said:

"Just a minute I would like to have you meet a friend of mine." He took me by the arm and deliberately led me to the telephone-booth in the lobby, secured his connection and presented me over the wire:

"Fred, I want you to meet a charming young lady from Detroit."

"So you are from Detroit?" a magnetic voice inquired. "Do you ever go to Milwaukee?"

My mind leaped to the previous New Year's Eve. "I've been there once," I replied laughing.

"I have been hoping to meet a certain lady from Detroit who attended a New Year's party in Milwaukee last year," the thrilling voice continued.

I held my hand over the mouthpiece. "Who is he?" I demanded of my escort, although I already knew by some inexplicable intuition the answer. I recognised the name instantly, although I had heard it but once before, almost a year ago.

"I believe I met someone you know there," I added.
 "What a coincidence!"

"Not at all! I knew we should meet some day. To-night—then, to-morrow being Sunday, the first thing in the morning? . . . But what happened to your voice?"

"Is there anything wrong with it?"

"Well, 'till morning'!"

"Au revoir!" The words trembled as I placed the receiver on the hook.

When I returned home an hour later I shut myself in my room to the bewilderment of the family. There in the darkness I sat at the window in silent contemplation. In the distance the lights of skyscrapers and of cars threading their way through the traffic maze, wove brilliant, ever-shifting patterns. . . . The pattern of my life was being woven mysteriously. . . . Out of the city's million people why had Destiny singled out this man and myself . . . both strangers to each other—to bring us together. He had never heard my name!

I slept restlessly. A knock on my door, breaking my morning sleep, recalled me to consciousness. There in the doorway stood a maid, almost hidden from sight by two huge flower-boxes. He had come—and was impatient to see me! I flew into my clothes attempting a hurried toilet, tore the covers from the boxes and there before me lay sheafs of American Beauty roses and magnificent yellow and russet-coloured chrysanthemums. The room was permeated with their fragrance. My arms filled with blossoms, I rushed to the library—there visible, as though he had materialised out of the flower's beauty and my dreams, stood my future husband, his fine, clear grey eyes looking steadily into mine.

And there are people who would call it a coincidence.

Nine happy months followed during which I obtained a divorce from the husband of early youth, whose death occurred a few months later.

We were married in the Vanderbilt Marble Collegiate Church on Fifth Avenue, New York, and spent a gloriously happy honeymoon at Palm Beach. Once

again a round of social activities began which imposed their pattern of feverish, useless, sophisticated activity upon my life.

One day the cook asked permission to take the third evening off that week.

"I attend lectures," she explained.

"Lectures?"

"Yes, I'm a Theosophist!"

Twenty minutes' conversation with the cook disclosed that this young woman of twenty-four was brilliant, well-educated and devoted to a younger brother whom she was putting through college. However, in Theosophy she seemed to have found a meaning of life that had vainly eluded me.

"What does Theosophy actually mean to you?" I asked.

In a few sentences she sketched the theory of evolution, grounded on Buddhism.

Her sincerity, her seeming ability to find her own place in the cosmic scheme through this philosophy, interested me. Together we attended a lecture. Other lectures followed and I eventually began a course of study in Theosophy.

It seemed to me that its followers had become so absorbed in the intellectual phases of their philosophy, in the explanation of the world as it happens to be with all its injustices, that they had overlooked the more important aspects of the teaching as given by Madam Blavatsky. My vision of a spiritual life was a living source of power of which the soul is a definite part of the whole, instead of a remote God as a puller of strings in a cosmic puppet show in which we are all marionettes. What I sought was the living God, the Force and the Purpose of Life, not in the grey past, but a living future—a philosophy of religion that would do something about life, about the individual life, about me as an individual, about my fellow-men!

The previous winter pneumonia laid me low and I had emerged with a sensitive lung condition. A specialist advised my husband to send me south to the sun that winter.

A whole season spent in vacuous idleness at Palm Beach! Awful! It sounded like a death-sentence to one whose soul was athirst and in search for real meaning of life.

My husband solved my problem. "Florida hasn't all the sunshine. Why don't you go to the Orient for a trip, then you can have all the warmth and sunshine you require, and can study philosophies and religion where they come from." His sympathetic interest made it possible for me later to travel nine times around the world in pursuit of my grand quest, which had become the main object of my life.

We accumulated books on every known "ism," and about every known "ist," acquiring what a friend and biblical scholar described as "the nucleus of the finest private library I have ever seen" on science, psychology, metaphysics, religious and allied subjects.

I ran the gamut of modern philosophical movements—Unity, Psychical Research, New Thought and Christian Science. The last centred my attention longer than the others.

Anxious to arouse the interest of people in this new sphere of knowledge, I placed most of my books at their disposal by establishing a public library and reading-room in the heart of the city. A brilliant young Englishwoman was engaged as librarian. Every possible effort was made to attract the public to the more advanced ideas of spiritual philosophy and evolution. Later Fellowship Hall was opened to the public as a meeting-place. I installed my library there and provided what I believed would prove a congenial atmosphere in a Chinese setting of black and gold. Every effort was met, not so much with opposition, as with indifference and apathy. Often I reflected and wondered about the fascination of the bridge-table for men and women who consider themselves intellectual, civilized and even cultured.

Horizons expanded as I absorbed knowledge from each of these great movements, yet it was only a temporary fulfilment. Always I came to the wall—dark, impenetrable—between me and the indefinable reality of

which I was in search. The path they bade me tread was circular—it led back to “oneself” at base, the very base from which I sought liberation. I was wearied to nausea with introspection. I wanted more than the promise of a better “personal” existence if I held the positive consciousness Christian Science entrained. Theosophy, even with its great teaching of the unity of men and faiths, still dwelt too much in the past. I was not interested in dead “Yesterday!”

Somewhat vaguely I knew there must be a golden “To-morrow.” Where else was hope? Was there a philosophy or religion somewhere that could point the way?

That summer, by an apparently chance visit to “Green Acre” at Eliot, Maine, we met a group of warm-hearted, intelligent people who seemed to have found the way. They were called Bahá’is and were spending the summer at their community “Green Acre,” studying economics, science, world affairs, and allied subjects, from a spiritual source entirely new to us. When I asked the meaning of the name, I was informed it was an Arabic¹ word that means “Light” and that it was a new interpretation of all the religions of the earth—stripped of the trappings of dogma and creed, thus naked Truth was found to be reality. This teaching, I was told, came from a great Persian from the princely house of Nur, known as Baha’u’lláh.

The course on comparative religion, economics, science, philosophy, psychology and allied subjects, contributed by such men as Kirtly Mather of Harvard, on “Science and Religion”; Herbert Adams Gibbons, on “International Current Events”; Dr. Shepherd of Columbia on “East and West”; Professor Hawkins of Smith College on “Racial Relationships”; Professor Burt of the University of Chicago on “Science, Philosophy and Religion”; Professor Schmidt, “Evolution of Religion,” and other eminent scholars, were all-absorbing.

¹ Just as Latin crept into the European language, so Arabic, the language of the Koran, forms a large part of post-Muhammadan Persian.

My husband's practical clear-cut mind was equally impressed. We left "Green Acre" with our minds made up on one point at least—what we had learned urged us to go East and this would be my first step towards the sunshine.

CHAPTER VI

IN SEARCH

AT last I was on the threshold of a great adventure! The summer over, my husband found it necessary to travel to South America and New Zealand on business. We agreed to meet in Berlin. Spurred as if by some unseen force, I returned home and prepared to leave the meaningless rounds of social existence on a quest whose goal I could not define even to myself. Unlike most travellers, fortified or encumbered with numerous letters of introduction, I set forth with nothing more than passport, and letter of credit. Friends offered me the usual "prestige in envelopes," but these I refused, intuitively knowing they would not add colour to my adventure.

Europe the previous season had brought its thrills of joyous excitement, but now even their memory bored me. It had somehow lost its savour—like a *soufflé* without salt, London, Paris, Cannes, Biarritz, Florence, Rome, Budapest, Lucerne, romantic Venice and even Vienna on New Year's Eve.

The same unappeased yearning for reality that I had felt at home hovered over every affair I attended in Europe. Insipid teas, gay cocktail parties, meaningless flirtations meant more to the men and women I had met than anything else.

The ostentatious demonstrations on Church holidays seemed like pagan festivals to ancient gods masquerading as Christian saints.

My snappy Lanvin frocks had brought me more thrills than the automatons with their pretence to sanctity passing in and out of lofty Notre-Dame.

But now I was headed for the fascinating Orient, land of spices and perfumes and timeless mysteries. The

Basra of Robert Hichens with its minarets and incense. Arabia with its eternal sands and black-tented Bedouins. Persia with its poets and rose gardens. I would see Damascus with its teeming bazaars and walk the streets of Baghdád, city of strange and ancient tales. Palestine, the cradle of Christianity.

Far behind the sunset that flamed across the purple Mediterranean, in the wake of our east-bound ship, lay the Western world with its ceaseless roar of motor horns, stop-lights and jangled traffic. Ahead lay Alexandria.

As I leaned on the deck rail, the moon formed a silver trail to Egypt. I wondered whether it would prove a path to the dim past in which Cleopatra held sway, to the days when the great library and museum made the westerly mouth of the Nile the world's centre of learning. What manner of insect was the fanatic, Bishop Theophilus, who led the Christians to burn the library with its priceless papyrus rolls.

I divided my time between these speculations, dancing, and betting on the metal horses on the mechanical race-track every afternoon on the promenade deck. I do not know whether it was the full Egyptian moon or the fine technique of the American bar-tender that inspired my speculations as to what turn the progress of human knowledge might have made if that colossal Alexandrian conflagration had not taken place.

Among my fellow-passengers, most of whom were pleasure-seekers, with the usual sprinkling of men on commercial or diplomatic business, was a Christian clergyman *en route* to Palestine—a rather pleasant person despite his straitened sense of humour. We were promenading the deck one star-lit evening when the subject of religion and its influence on world affairs came up.

I explained that my tour was for the express purpose of personally investigating and studying the religions of the world and that my first stop was Palestine.

He fairly bristled when I told him I had become deeply interested in a plan for a new world Commonwealth which had been given to the world by Bahá'u'lláh,

a great universal educator, who had sent forth, during and in spite of fifty years' imprisonment, his challenging letters to all the crowned heads of the world, including Queen Victoria and the President of the United States.

In Palestine, I told him, I hoped to meet Shoghi Effendi, the great grandson of Bahá'u'lláh, into whose hands the reins of this international movement had been placed. A man with a most extraordinarily comprehensive mind and who is in close touch with many of the best minds of to-day.

I tried to convey to him what I had learned at Eliot, how this new spiritual light would evolve order out of chaos.

"If we could achieve the new social consciousness, we could have a world of stability, justice—national boundaries would no longer be chasms of hate; there would be no idle rich, and no idle poor, instead of economic bewilderment. The world would have one consciousness, not brought about through the chimera of equality but through a system of education which would develop the ability of each individual."

My eloquence carried me away—he brought me to earth.

"Do you actually hope to discover a solution for world problems from some Moslems?" he snapped.

"What is the matter with Moslems, are Christians so hot? And didn't Judaism have something to do with the origin of Christianity? Do you think Christianity came to life on Broadway or Piccadilly? Didn't it all start in Palestine, and wasn't Jesus of Jewish birth? Do you think of Christianity as an offshoot of Judaism? Why couldn't the same thing happen again as prophesied in the Bible and a new teaching come out of Palestine if it is of Moslem origin? Who knows whether Christians will not repeat the same error as the Jews when they rejected Christ—more occupied with the physical being than the eternal light reflecting from within."

He fairly sputtered.

Now for my bulging note-book, the first occasion to use one of many carefully gleaned paragraphs from books

written by recognized thinkers, and which was shortly to prove most valuable in similar encounters with the roundheads of the world. I produced Lecky's I hope well-known statement, taken from his *History of European Morals*.

"That the greatest Religious change in the history of mankind should have taken place under the eyes of a brilliant galaxy of philosophers and historians who were profoundly conscious of the decompositions around them, that all of these writers should have utterly failed to predict the issue of the movement they were observing and that, during the space of those centuries, they should have treated as simply contemptible an agency which all men must now admit to have been, for good or evil, the most powerful moral lever that has ever been applied to the affairs of men, are facts well worthy of meditation in every period of religious transition."

"The Gospel of Christ is sufficient to solve all problems," the clergyman dogmatically persisted.

"Yes, everybody knows that, but it has failed to do so, and besides the Gospel was not written by Christ. Christ's teaching finds little place in the so-called Christian world, including orthodox theologies, to-day."

As we entered the smoking-room, where the usual apéritifs were being imbibed, a sly laughter went around when they spied my companion.

"Join in a highball!" someone said, but the clergyman snippily refused.

"Ah, I see, you take your poison in private," one of the men jibed. "As I passed the window late last night I saw you sitting right here having a highball all by yourself."

The clergyman eventually succumbed with fairly good grace to the banter, joined in a friendly drink and smoked a horribly smelly cigar.

"What made you look so terribly serious when you came through the door?" an attractive young English girl asked the dignitary with a guileful smile.

This question started the ball of conversation rolling along religious lines—a circumstance which the clergyman soon regretted, as an Atheist, a Christian Scientist and a “real” scientist joined in a general assault on “Churchianity.” In a racy mixture of Bible prophecy and modern slang we each interpreted our idea on religion.

I pointed out that the new departure from orthodox theology shows that outworn creeds are being dumped on the rubbish heap with antiquated superstitions, where they belong.

“You say that church membership has increased during the past few years in America and England. Spengler pointed out that : ‘the seed time and the golden autumn are seen together in religions.’ Perhaps this harvest of church-goers is only another indication that the Church ‘as is’ has gone to seed, that people are awakening to the call of the heart and naturally turning to the Church hoping for spiritual inspiration. With the exception of a very small minority of truly inspiring Christian clergymen—clergymen like Harry Emerson Fosdick of New York, Preston Bradley of Chicago, and some others—who have caught a new vision, there is little more than pious gloom and ‘empty form’ in the sepulchral atmosphere of most churches. Is it too much to suppose that the golden autumn of Christianity is at hand and a new teaching that can fill the need of the hour will eventually supercede what parades as Christianity?”

Again the note-book came forth, which seemed to have a sinister effect on our antagonist, while the atheist became unexpectedly fascinated by its contents, from among which he read, much to the interest of all present but one, some telling lines by Arnold Bennett :

“A new channel of communication with the Infinite and the Everlasting is clearly the Need of the Age : That is to say a new Religion. . . . Whence, from whom, in what Form, will the next Religion arrive ? We cannot even surmise. We can only wait for it. Quiescent. . . . Three Possibilities may however

be cautiously suggested concerning it. The first is that on its appearance it will not be identified. More, its identity as a new Religion will be violently denied. It will be laughed at, scorned. Its propagandists will be subjected to various ignominies. . . . The second probably is that it will incorporate itself in some of the forms of the Religion it is to supplant. Third Probability is that it will be based on such a Creed as a majority of the best minds can sincerely subscribe to. . . . The Wise will prepare for the Event less by speculation than by striving to rid themselves of the prejudices which impair judgment. . . .

"Every new Religion has first appeared as a magnificent and startling surprise."

I advised him to give at least one tolerant thought to the last chapter of H. G. Wells's *Outline of History*, where he would find a rather pertinent statement, which I did not think should be utterly despised :

"The old loyalties, the old too limited and narrow political and social assumptions, the old too elaborate religious formulae, have lost their power of conviction, and the greater ideas of a world state and of an economic commonwealth have been winning their way only very slowly to recognition. So far they have swayed only a minority of exceptional people. But out of the trouble and tragedy of this present time there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival. The beginnings of such things are never conspicuous. Great movements of the racial soul come at first 'like a thief in the night,' and then suddenly are discovered to be powerful and world-wide."

In spite of his glowering expression I dared to suggest that possibly The New World Order of Bahá'u'lláh might bring about the much-needed religious revival.

Judging from his attitude toward me during the remainder of the voyage, I doubt that he included "the little infidel" in his prayers that night. He avoided me

like the plague, declaring to others that I had belittled the teachings of Christ. At any rate I weathered his wrath, while he appeared very much the most unhappy passenger on board—and he, too, was Palestine bound!

CHAPTER VII

PHARAOH LAND

STIRRED by memories of Cleopatra's brilliant and tragic destiny; Queen Hetsu, prototype centuries before of Elizabeth of England, and of the barbarous murder of Hypatia, I arrived at Alexandria. But nothing remained to mark the incomparable reign of the Serpent of the Nile—even her two obelisks having been removed, one to London and one to New York, and nothing to commemorate the martyrdom of Hypatia, that eloquent, intellectual beauty whom Socrates describes as being torn from her chariot, dragged to the Cæsareum by a fanatical mob and finally burned. Woman-like I was disappointed.

Despite the catacomb and the inevitable contrast of people, costumes and architecture, I discovered a surprisingly Western bustle in this ancient metropolis. Alexander chose well the site that was to perpetuate his name for two thousand, five hundred years, for even when the Allies in the twentieth century decided to push on their operations in the Near East, Africa and the Dardanelles, they made this city base of operations.

Along the wharves where Nile and Mediterranean meet in ship canals, thousands of Aba-robed figures stowed sacks of cotton into sailing feluccas, with the curving, uptilted prows one sees on ancient inscriptions. Their tall pointed sails seemed about to overbalance them. Beyond, an American steamer threw a sooty streamer into the intensely blue sky.

Alexandria is as cosmopolitan as it was under the Ptolemies and these cosmopolites have other things to think about than the city's former greatness. Unconscious of the mystery lurking in narrow alleys and broad avenues, they ply their way amid the hustle-bustle of

this ancient port, endeavouring to wrest as much out of material life as possible.

Poverty and riches stalk side by side. Disease and joyous living mock each other on the highways. Happiness and misery jostle each other in the crowded bazaars, which are piled high with antique treasures—rugs, brasses, silks—and amber beads, which on closer investigation too often bear the earmarks: "Made in Germany."

The sculptured features of the fellahin in red tarboosh and robe and the long-lashed eyes of the slender women whose gaze so dark and luminous above their yashmaks seemed to come straight from the ancient past.

In the countless coffee-houses, robed figures smoked the *nargileh* and listened to the exploits of Abu-Zed as told to their forebears by other narrators a thousand years ago. The lute and flute and fiddle wailed their millennium-old tunes. A dusky dancing girl performed the same rhythmic evolutions as her remote forerunners, and from the cabaret of the modern hotel nearby saxophones snarled forth their latest American jazz importations.

The energetic and ambitious American consul helped me find a competent dragoman for a round of the usual tourist sights, then escorted me to the roof garden at Claridges, where some of the smart tourists were exchanging their impressions and banter over highballs and martinis. Except for the incidental *motifs* of decorations, the setting might almost be Genoa or Naples. The Europeans and Americans carry their own atmosphere with them.

Beyond the animated excitement of the tourist groups and the commercial activity of the port, I sought in vain to recapture some of the spirit that had once made Alexandria the world's centre of learning and the mother of religions.

It was here, histories record, that the trinity of father, mother and child was worshipped in the form of Serapis, Isis and Horus, two centuries before Paul adopted the doctrine of the trinity and made it one of the central doctrines of Christianity—a term which he probably invented to apply to the theology that was erected about

the teachings of Jesus. Here was the home of the Aryan heresy and the Athanasian creed. But Serapis and Ammon and Bel-Marduk—once mighty gods—were dead indeed. Modern business had taken hold of these ancient peoples.

I found it stimulating to study these mysterious and ancient beliefs in the land of their origin. But most of my fellow-tourists preferred to sample Egypt's flesh-pots, which I admit are not always to be despised.

At Cairo the bizarre atmosphere appeared to be intensified. It is the tourist's Egypt in essence. For a few pieces of silver one may be guided to the supposed site of Moses' emergence from the bulrushes, climb the great Pyramid at twilight or, if fortunate enough, view the capital of Egypt from the minaret of some massive mosque. Viewed from such vantage point, this city of the Fatimite caliphs seemed like some fantastic Oriental dream. One may have one's fortune told by some black-eyed sand-diviner on top of Giza or purchase faked scarabs and vases from the tomb of King Tutankh-Amen.

Sitting on the Moorish porch of Shepheard's Hotel or the Semiramis on the Nile, whither extravagantly attired dragomen flock to lure the arriving Occidentals, one sees the whole world pass in a fascinating pageantry. Donkey-boys and whining beggars, every type of Oriental, men and women from all Christendom. Camels and tiny donkeys tread many of the streets as they did centuries ago. Hawkers of fly-switches and lucky beads ceaselessly cry their wares. A kaleidoscopic procession flows beneath the overhanging balconies of shuttered houses and about the base of soaring mosques.

As we walked down Mouski Street, I was appalled to encounter one out of about every twenty natives minus an eye as the result of the dread disease, ophthalmia, which is carried by flies.

For the average European tourist the Sphinx and Pyramids form the objects of a sentimental journey and the background of a snapshot. One can dance at the foot of Cheops and Giza pyramids and on the veranda of Mena House with the bravado with which we mortals

pretend to laugh at death, life and their inscrutable mysteries.

Nevertheless, the immensity of these monuments overwhelmed me with the weight of forty centuries. In these massive works, a staggering feat of engineering accomplished by ancestors of the fellahin who still make up the bulk of Egypt's population, one sees erected one of man's first crude symbols of immortality. That Sphinx has watched whole dynasties and nations rise and fall, but its eyes are unseeing. The great Pyramid has guarded the dust of the great despot Cheops in a confused effort to keep out time with masses of masonry and to identify mortal clay with the undying soul.

Only the structures have survived. Worship of the Sphinx has passed away like that of Bel-Marduk and Seraphis, and with it the idea of immortality as expressed in the Pyramids. Of ancient Egypt which raised these symbols, only the Egyptian remains, and he has sufficiently advanced to progress from the faith of his forefathers to that of Islam.

Dead tired after a twenty-four-mile camel ride to old Memphis and back, I boarded the "Milk and Honey" express, headed for Haifa and Damascus.

Early in the morning, after a night of fitful sleep, the train crawled along the margin of the Mediterranean and my drowsy eyes were greeted by green terraced slopes, the slopes of Mount Carmel, with the white walls of a Carmelite Nunnery outlined against a background of the soft grey-green of olive trees. Slowly we passed the old Hesbian market-place—a halting-place for caravans in the time of the Crusaders, where figures in robes and kafehs and yashmaks and in Western garb, were buying and selling vegetables and fruit, especially oranges, from Jaffa. A few minutes later I arrived at my destination, Haifa!

CHAPTER VIII

MOUNT CARMEL

IN the few years since my first visit, Haifa has become the principal port of Palestine, the seat of oil and other industries. But at that time it was a small city of slight interest to tourists, its importance quite overshadowed by the prison city of Akka—the Acre of the Crusaders—on the opposite side of the bay. Only a few sailing craft leaned their white and coloured sails against the slight breeze in the harbour. All was serenity.

With the Bahá'í Guest House as my goal I climbed out of the train and into the waiting car, full of excited anticipation. I was driven through the winding streets of Haifa, past its bazaars and coffee-houses. About half way to my destination, I turned to gaze back at the drowsy city and the mists that were rising like thin veils blown back by the wind out of the blue of Akka's Bay. The warm April sun threw an enchantment over the quiet little city.

At the foot of Mount Carmel the car turned up a narrow street near the Millerite Colony, whose founders had sold all their property, stripped themselves of worldly possessions and had come here in 1844 from Germany and America to build their colony and await the coming of Christ, as prophesied in the Book of Daniel and Revelations. A few yards ahead brought us to the Bahá'í Guest House, a small building enclosed within a walled garden with high iron gates, overgrown with glowing reddish-purple bougainvillæa.

I was greeted most cordially by a smiling Japanese named Fugeta, who had been attached for a number of years to the household of a prominent Chicago Bahá'í.

Within the house I was impressed by a very long

table covered with spotless linen which somehow reminded me of Leonardo da Vinci's "Last Supper."

Shortly before luncheon, while I sat chatting with several English and American guests, the door quickly opened and Shoghi Effendi came briskly towards me, offering a firm hand and a friendly welcome. He was the most alive-looking person I have ever met—a fine brow above frank, youthful-looking eyes, sensitive nose and mouth contrasted greatly with the firm, decidedly positive chin and mature mind I later encountered, with a dignity of bearing that compensates for his somewhat youthful appearance—this Guardian of a New World Order which is destined to play a tremendous part in the world of international affairs, if we can judge by recent writings of historians and eminent men.

I asked many questions and he replied in exquisite English. He had studied languages at Oxford, was there, in fact, when the cable arrived announcing the death of his grandfather, Abdu'l Bahá in 1921.

I was surprised to learn that some of the great minds of his day had accepted Bahá'u'lláh, Tolstoy having said :

"Most of us spend our precious lives trying to unravel the mysteries of the universe, while there is one in a Turkish prison (Bahá'u'lláh), who holds the secret."

Particularly impressive was Shoghi Effendi's statement :

"The call of Bahá'u'lláh is primarily directed against all forms of provincialism, all insularities and prejudices. If long-cherished ideals and time-honoured formulas have ceased to promote the welfare of the generality of mankind, if they no longer minister to the needs of a continually evolving humanity, let them be swept away and relegated to the limbo of obsolescent and forgotten creeds. Why should these, in a world subject to immutable law of change and decay, be exempt from the deterioration that must needs overtake every human institution? For legal standards,



CONVENT OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, BETHLEHEM

VIEW FROM THE CONVENT OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, BETHLEHEM



political and economic theories are solely designed to safeguard the interests of humanity as a whole, and not humanity to be crucified for the preservation of the integrity of any particular law or doctrine.

"The oneness of mankind, world unity, is the foundation of the new World Order. It is a unity, complete and profound, which embraces unity in the political realm, in world undertakings, in freedom and in religion, of nations, of races and of language.

"The proclamation of the Oneness of Mankind, which is the head corner-stone of Bahá'u'lláh's dominion, implies both a warning that in it lies the sole means of saving a greatly suffering world from utter destruction, a promise that its realization is at hand."

He spoke of the difference of the world to-day from that existing one hundred years ago, of scientific progress, of racial animosity and the existing chaos in our economic and political life. He said that Europe had become paralysed by the upheavals in industry and commerce, and that nothing short of a divine solution could prevent a calamity which would plunge the world into a catastrophe unparalleled in history.

He said, too, that the New World Order does not conflict with existing loyalties, but on the contrary, has embodied within its policy a world regenerating spirit based upon love and brotherhood, which alone can bring the world powers together in a common bond of mutual understanding. The day for national and provincial bias is gone by and the future is bright with possibilities for international co-operation in every field of human endeavour.

"Just where do you place Bahá'u'lláh, and how would he compare with Christ?" I asked. "Do you believe Bahá'u'lláh to be the 'Prince of Peace?' According to the Bible does not Jesus say that He came *not* to bring peace but a sword?"

This brought about a most enlightening and graphic explanation of prophecy from the bibles and sacred books of the world; the Zend Avesta of the

Zoroastrians, the Old Testament, the Kaballah and Torah of the Jews, the New Testament, of the Christians, the ancient Pali Sanskrit writings of the Buddhists, and teachings of Lao-tse and Confucius, most of which foretell the coming of "The Promised One."

"The Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh should be regarded as signalizing through its advent the *coming of age of the entire human race*. It should be viewed not merely as yet another spiritual revival in the everchanging fortunes of mankind, not only as a further stage in a chain of progressive Revelations, not even as the culmination of one of a series of recurrent prophetic cycles, but rather as marking the last and highest stage in the stupendous evolution of man's collective life on this planet. The emergence of a world community, the consciousness of world citizenship, the founding of a world civilization and culture . . . should be regarded, as far as this planetary life is concerned, as the furthestmost limits in the organization of human society, though man, as an individual, will, nay must indeed, as a result of such a consummation, continue to progress and develop . . ."

There was little room to doubt that a "Prince of Peace" had appeared.

During the nine days I spent in Haifa, I culled the following from Bahá'i writings :

"To be a real Christian, is to be a servant in Christ's cause and kingdom, to go forth under his banner of peace and love toward all mankind, to be tolerant, to become quickened by the truths of the Holy Spirit, to be a mirror reflecting the radiance of the divinity of Christ, to be a fruitful tree in the garden of his planting, to refresh the world by the water of life of His teachings ; in all things to be like him and filled with the spirit of His love . . ."

"All the teaching of the prophets is one : one faith, one divine light shining throughout the world. . . .

"Each manifestation of God has a distinct indivi-

duality, a definitely prescribed Mission, a predestined Revelation, and specially designated limitations. Each is known by a different Name and is characterized by a special attribute."

In both the Old and New Testaments three prophecies were pointed out regarding a "New Name" in reference to the "Second Coming." It is a strange thing that there is a sort of mob psychology of prejudice against anything bearing a new name.

Throughout one entire luncheon and for two hours following Shoghi Effendi answered numberless questions that were put to him. As he spoke on the subject closest to his heart he was vibrant with energy. As I looked at him, my mind reverted to a few highly significant words written by Lord Curzon:¹ "Of no small account, then, must be the tenets of a creed that can awaken in its followers so rare and beautiful a spirit of self-sacrifice." It was not difficult to realize I had just met a man who would willingly sacrifice his life for the same Cause.

During the afternoon, we walked half-way up the mountain and through the terraced gardens. Almost opposite stood the stone house occupied by Shoghi Effendi. Above the Guest House on the slope of the mountain rose the Tomb of the Bab, the Forerunner who had proclaimed the "Coming of Bahá'u'lláh," and resting serenely against a background of cypress trees.

In the archives, three recently-built rooms, added to the Bab's Tomb, were tiers of bookcases containing many prized volumes, recent translations and other documents. On top of one of the bookcases stood a framed letter, which crossing the room, I found to be written in the firm, bold hand of Queen Marie of Roumania :

"The Bahá'i teaching brings peace and understanding.

"It is like a wide embrace gathering together all those who have longed, searched for words of hope.

¹ *Persia and the Persian Question*, Vol. I.

It accepts all great prophets gone before ; it destroys no other beliefs and leaves all doors open.

"Saddened by the continual strife among the believers of many confessions and wearied of their intolerance towards each other, I discovered in the Bahá'i teaching the real spirit of Christ so often denied and misunderstood.

"Unity instead of strife, Hope instead of condemnation, Love instead of Hate, and a great reassurance for all men.

MARIE."

Leaving the archives, we entered the Tomb of Abdu'l Bahá, where we were greeted by the fragrance of flowers. Over magnificent Persian rugs we trod noiselessly to the opening of the inner chamber. Through a doorway hung with dull gold net, we gazed in serene meditation. An immense rug nearly covered the floor. At either end stood exquisitely carved candelabra. A cluster of electric lights, hanging from the ceiling, threw an amber light across the room. All was calm, serene. I felt myself suffused with a feeling of peace indefinable.

This one-storied building of grey stone, simple in its decoration, held something within its walls of a majesty so overwhelming that I had a feeling of insignificance and non-being. Surrounding the building lay a lovely terraced garden, full of tropical trees, artistically laid out by Shoghi Effendi, and planted by Persian Bahá'is, many of whom had journeyed here on foot at great sacrifices.

As we slowly descended the path to the house, the sun was sinking into the blue haze of the bay of Akka, suffusing Mount Carmel and the town at its feet with a rosy hue. My eye fell on the buildings of Zionist colonists creeping up the side of the mountain as though in fulfilment of the ancient covenant that Jehovah had made with the chosen people.

As we entered the high iron gates, a venerable woman, wearing a white head scarf, and with the face of a saint, stood in the doorway. It was Moneera Khánum, the widow of Abdu'l Bahá. She walked toward me, taking

me in her arms as a mother would a child who is just learning to walk. "My daughter," she said, as if she had known me all her life. As she held me thus, I felt that on the bosom of this universal mother, all the raging forces of the world had found calm and serenity.

CHAPTER IX

THE STREET CALLED STRAIGHT

DAMASCUS is probably the oldest existing city in the world. According to Josephus it was founded by Noah's great grandson, Uz. At any rate, it was a city of antiquity long before Athens, Rome or Alexandria had been founded, and its damask and damascene steel and linen made its artisans and craftsmen famous the world over four centuries before Christ.

I conveyed me down the street, called Straight—where Paul met Ananias—by the most ancient means of locomotion available, in an attempt to preserve this venerable atmosphere.

With the two or three surviving cylinders of the motor coughing violently, every nut and bolt rattling, with the brakes shrieking protest, we bumped our way over the heavy cobblestones through trains of pack mules laden with oranges from Jaffa, a caravan of camels with rugs from Bokhara, patiently plodding pack donkeys and wheezing, honking, second-hand European motor cars.

On either side, the intriguing heavily-latticed balconies of pink-roofed houses looked down upon us. In every direction, delicately carved minarets of the city's two hundred mosques pierced the turquoise sky.

In the centre of the city we halted at the Great Mosque, which covers a site nearly twice as large as that of the Capitol in Washington. The floor of its huge dome-topped hall of worship was covered with gorgeous rugs, while beneath a marble chapel in the centre of the mosque—which I did not see—supposedly rest the ashes of the head of John the Baptist, who is to-day worshipped by the Moslems.

I was surprised also to learn that Muhammad not only believed in Christ, but that one of the first things he did after he announced himself as the Prophet of God was to ask the leaders of Mecca: "Why have you not accepted the gospel of Christ?"

Once capital of the Omayyad caliphs, Damascus is still the centre of Islam, and prejudice, into which the religion has decayed, flourishes—much as it has the world over. My guide reminded me that not so many years ago Christians living in the City were massacred, and cautioned me against entering certain mosques and other holy places.

As one rides through this pearl-tinted city of yesterday, it is easy to understand why Muhammad called it an earthly paradise, and turned his steps away from its gate. Particularly thrilling to the traveller are the bazaars, streets roofed over at the third story level and lined with tiny shops, just as they must have been a thousand years ago. These bazaars are said to be among the largest in the East, and they are crammed full of priceless merchandise. Dismissing what might be called a car, I spent hours walking between shops piled high with rare rugs, antique and modern embroideries, etched silver, hammered brassware, inlaid woodwork, carved jewellery and tooled leather goods.

Merchants sat cross-legged as of old, on their narrow shop platforms, punctiliously offering tiny cups of Turkish coffee, samples of perfume or amber-scented cigarettes as a ruse to tempt, wheedle or cajole Occidentals to buy at ridiculously high prices. Bargaining is a part of the game and no one but a tenderfoot pays the first, second or even third price offered, no matter how anxious he may be to secure the desired article. American dollars have a peculiar fascination in Oriental bazaars and elsewhere.

Ubiquitous hawkers sang out their time-old invitations to purchase mouth-watering sweets, health-giving bread, fruit from the garden of paradise, fortune beads, and what-not.

My visit was made additionally pleasant by this cordial welcome as a guest of the Persian Consul-General,

to whom I brought a message from one of his friends at the Embassy in Washington, and by the unexpected presence of M. Barney Dreyfus, whom I had met in Paris and Haifa. He had come here *en route* to Baghdád on a commission for Shoghi Effendi.

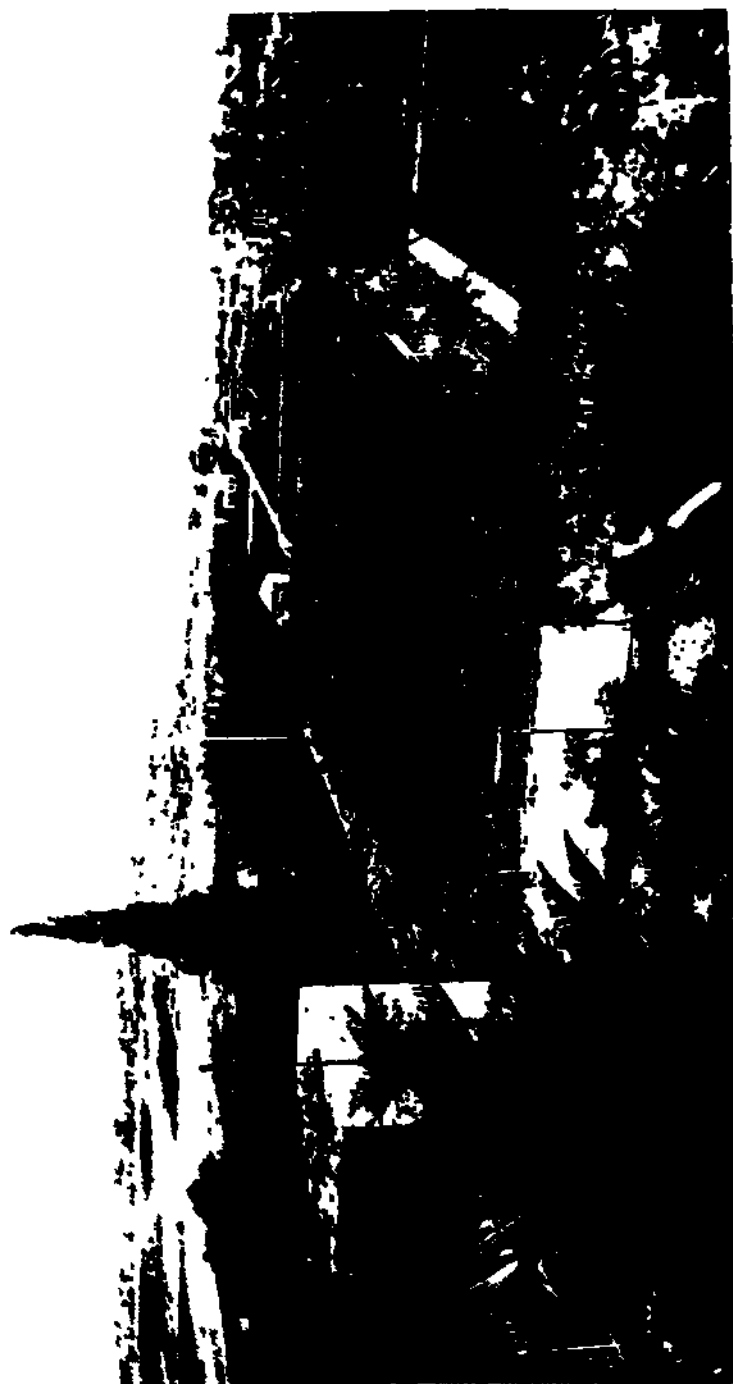
The route to Baghdád by way of Aleppo and Homs, where the Roman Emperor Aurelius conquered Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, was impassable because heavy rains had turned portions of it into mud-holes and pools of water. The last motor car to reach Damascus from Aleppo had to be carried across on the shoulders of Arabs, M. Dreyfus had been informed by the British Consul at Damascus, Mr. Edward Palmer.

M. Dreyfus continued: "Only a few Europeans have ever crossed the 'Hamád,' a vast desert between Damascus and Baghdád, few British officers even—and they mainly explorers and diplomatic messengers. It is infested with hostile Bedouins. Last week a troop of French *chasseurs* set out from some barracks on the 'Hamád' near Palmyra, on racing camels, and they were seized thirty miles out by Bedouins, stripped naked and left to make their way as best they could. So far as I know, no European traveller has ever motored across the 'Hamád'."

Baghdád suddenly became the apple of my eye. I fussed the entire day, despite the fascinating sights that Damascus held, at the apparent impossibility of reaching the enchanted city of "The Thousand and One Nights." Arabia of the fairy tales—Omar Khayyám's Persia—was it a glamour of roses and nightingales? In the timeless flash of the mind's eye I remembered Shoghi Effendi, Moneera Khánum—had I expected Persians to look and talk as they did? Surely not! Most of us know gardens, and Persian rugs and Persian cats, and perhaps—the Rubáiyát. Well, I would see Persia for myself.

That evening an Arab servant handed me a card and informed me that His Excellency, Mr. Edward Palmer, was waiting for me in the reception-room. This spelled Baghdád! In my excitement I almost fell down the stairway.

Monsieur Dreyfus had told him of my wish. At the



TERRACE GARDEN

foot of the stairs I was greeted with a cheery "good morning" by a rather good-looking Englishman, a little over average height, arrayed in white ducks and wearing a white cork helmet with the usual gold insignia of British consular service.

So this was Edward Palmer, who had been taken prisoner by the Turks during the war and held captive for two years, before making his escape. Characteristically, he went direct to the reason for our meeting.

"Why this sudden rush for Baghdád?" he inquired, with a cheerful smile. "Three English ladies have been to see me about Baghdád, all keen to get to the city of the Arabian Nights, and now M. Dreyfus tells me that you too wish to go."

"Well, why not?" I asked. "Isn't Baghdád, Baghdád? And then after Baghdád, Persia."

Palmer laughed a boyish laugh, then added wistfully: "I've been hoping to take the trip myself for more than a year. Old Muhammad Bassam, the rich merchant of Damascus and Baghdád, has promised me safe conduct across the 'Hamád'; he has been conducting caravans across the Syrian desert since heaven knows when, and knows all the leading Bedouin tribes. Now he's anxious to establish a transport service and has asked me to try to open it officially. I can do this and continue on my original intention visiting Babylon on my leave this year."

According to Palmer, however, the Italian Lancia car which Bassam planned to put at his disposal for this trip had just been confiscated by the French authorities on the charge that it had been used to smuggle Turkish lira in defiance of the embargo on gold exports.

Palmer's vivid recitation of the dangers that threatened me—heat, tyre-tearing basalt rock waste, the chance of missing the water-holes, or of finding them dry or in the hands of cut-throats—only piqued my desire to be the first Western woman to cross the Hamád and a number of the first party to complete the trek by automobile—at least officially. Over a whisky and soda he agreed to *visé* my passport to Baghdád, provided he could have the Lancia released by the French authorities.

With characteristic energy, Palmer settled the matter within the next three days by signing his name to a guarantee to return the automobile within three weeks—in time for the investigation—or forfeit several hundred pounds. By noon of the next day the car was released—much to our relief and the excessive joy of Muhammad Bassam. We decided to start three days later.

Bassam was a dignified, white-haired, stocky man—a shaykh who wore the gold-embroidered abiyeh of the merchant class and the green scarf around his fez which signifies that he has made the hadj to Mecca. Bassam kept his warehouses stocked with silken rugs and other priceless merchandise from Persia, India and the Far East by operating his own caravans across the Syrian Desert. During the war, it was said he had become a millionaire by supplying camels and horses to General Allenby. By liberal grants of gold to certain shaykhs he had been able to buy protection for his caravans from a half-dozen cut-throat Bedouin tribes.

Now, shrewdly seizing the opportunity of motorizing transportation across the desert, he had conceived the plan of winning the goodwill of the British by inviting Mr. Palmer to open up the new trade route, promising him safe conduct and permitting him to take credit for himself and his Government.

I was told that an English major then in Beirut, had asked Palmer if he could accompany him in his own car, taking with him a British Army mechanic and driver. The three ladies had also won Palmer's assent to follow in their car.

We were to start at daybreak.

CHAPTER X

ACROSS THE HAMĀD

DAY had boiled over the eastern rim of Damascus scattering the stars, when the attractive Major called for me and assisted me to climb into the back seat beside him over a running-board strapped high with luggage. When we arrived at the British Consulate, Mr. Palmer announced that I was to ride beside him in the Lancia touring car, which he had lined invitingly with chintz cushions. So I hurriedly climbed over the luggage and into the other car. At almost the same moment the three ladies arrived in their Chevrolet.

Before we had strapped the last piece of luggage to our running-boards and begun our eastward trek down the street called Straight, and out of the city's eastern gate, the sun had leaped in all its dazzling intensity over the far hills, and we turned our eyes for a final look at the city out of which arose a few tall minarets caught in the waking sun's flood of light. Muhammad Bassam occupied the front seat of the Lancia beside the chauffeur—a slender abiyeh-wrapped Syrian.

Just behind us rode the Chevrolet bearing the other members of the party, while bringing up the rear was another car carrying the mechanics and equipment.

We soon raised the top—against the sun's glare, which began to beat down upon us the moment we had traversed the narrow strip of cultivated land that surrounds Damascus. Within a few hours the heat had become almost unbearable—stifling, burning, unceasing—and intensified, as though by blasts from a foundry, by the wind that the car engendered. The shaded thermometer on the panel of our car registered 118 degrees. Palmer and I had frequent recourse to our camel-hair water bottles with only temporary relief,

but Bassam and the chauffeur appeared as cool and alert as any Americans speeding through a tree-shaded road in Maine.

With Palmer acting as interpreter, the elderly Shaykh regaled me with a lively account of domestic life in Damascus and the extent of his considerable wealth and influence. Then, twisting around in his seat so that he could look at me, he said something that caused the Consul to question him in surprise, for I heard the same words repeated. Then jokingly, Palmer said:

"Muhammad Bassam wishes to know, will you marry him!"

Although my knowledge of the Arabic sense of humour is somewhat limited, I treated the proposal as a joke and replied:

"I am sorry. You are too late. I accepted the British Consul twenty minutes ago!"

This was translated to the Shaykh in a serious voice, although my interpreter could not conceal his inward mirth, whereupon Muhammad Bassam frowned and finally retorted:

"Madam, I have honoured you in my proposal. We seldom marry ladies over sixteen in Arabia." Wow!

With this naive remark, Bassam terminated our conversation, turning forward in his seat, and he and the chauffeur fell to smoking interminable Syrian cigarettes.

My head ached abominably from the heat. Conversation became too strenuous, and the rest of the day's journey was completed with few words exchanged between us, except when the Shaykh pointed out, from time to time, the landmarks which dotted this reddish brown ocean of waste—ridges that stretched across the desert like earth-coloured caravans, clumps of low-lying sage brush, an occasional water-hole that once had been basalt rocks, tumbled—as though by ancient giants upon each other in fantastic forms. The merciless sun, now molten metal, suspended from the ceiling of the blue bowl above transformed the Hamád into a low plate of burnished copper from whose centre we vainly attempted to fly towards the ever-receding rim.

We warded off the sun with káfieh and agal fastened round our heads and draped across our faces.

For miles our course would lead over sandy surface, then across outcroppings of basalt, some of which resembled long knife-blades and so sharp they would have slashed our tyres to pieces had not our keen-eyed driver avoided them. Again we would scorch across a table-level expanse of clay—and dried bed of one of those temporary lakes that spring up all over the Hamád after a cloudburst. Leaning forward, I watched the needle of our speedometer reach 120, then 140, as we fled eastward.

"Those are kilometres," laughed Palmer. But even so, calculation showed that we were doing nearly ninety miles an hour in this first official motor drive in history across the Syrian desert.

It was almost noon when I cried out: "There's an oasis. Look at the palm trees silhouetted against the sky."

But Palmer was doubtful and Bassam shook his head, and a few minutes later we found, in the place where we had beheld the image of cool palm trees clustered about a long narrow streak of silver water, nothing but unmargined waste—reddish brown, broken by an occasional tuft of sagebrush or stretch of basalt—a mirage. The air rose in a thickened shimmering curtain about us, distorting the landscape and bubbling up successive mirages so realistic that they assumed forms as of some fantastic world through which I was being whirled.

The sun had dropped low in the sky at our back before we reached the water-hole, a mere cleavage in the earth into which I almost walked.

The level of the water had gone down so far that it was only by lying on their stomachs and hanging to the end of the rope that our attendants were able to pull up enough water in gasoline tins to strain into the radiators of our over-heated cars. The water was foul and full of fossils, one resembling a sea-horse three inches long, but the Lancia seemed not to mind, although we were out of luck for the morning face splash.

In the meantime, Muhammad Bassam had superintended the spreading of one of the most magnificent rugs from his Damascus warehouse on the desert floor. Seated on the edge of the rug, we were soon dining on meat cakes, chicken cooked in saffron, Arab bread, three-cornered pastries which Bassam had brought from Damascus in a four-tiered container, and bitter Bedouin coffee *à la Hamád*, piping hot. We feasted in true Oriental fashion, holding the chicken in our fingers and picking it quite unabashed to the bone. The occupants of the other car preferred to "dine" by themselves on a white linen tablecloth on hard-boiled eggs, bully beef and everything else un-Arabian. Can anyone by any stretch of the imagination picture a white linen tablecloth on the Hamád?

We had scarcely started to eat when the sun sank beneath the far purple rim, the stars rushed out in brilliant array and the temperature fell so rapidly that I lost little time in shivering into my fur coat. Night had come on almost as quickly as one extinguishes the electric lights in a room by turning a button. But the Arab driver had gathered a pile of sagebrush and fired it into a warming blaze that lit up the desert for half a mile.

After a discussion between the Consul and the Major as to whether we should spend the night here or go on, Palmer won his point and we started out again.

With the night and the coolness, not to mention our desert meal and rest, our spirits revived. In spite of the Major's continued protests, we felt perfectly safe since Sir Percy Cox, the British High Commissioner at Baghdád, had wired Mr. Palmer the previous day that he would send an Army plane to search for us if we failed to arrive on schedule.

The headlights of our car flashed through the night, cutting swaths of colour in the blackness and adding their own magic to the mystery of the desert night.

Suddenly, we were pitched forward as our car struck some unseen projection and was braked to an abrupt halt. We had hit a long jagged blade of basalt, staving

a hole in the crank-case the size of a grape-fruit, through which the oil gushed. We had plenty of petrol strapped to the running-boards in large petrol tins, but a very small amount of oil. And there are no filling-stations in the Hamád! We poured out of our cars to survey the damage, and Bassam announced that we should stop here for the night while the chauffeurs and mechanic attempted to repair the damage. This they eventually did, by working half the night, finally binding pieces of inner tubes over the hole.

Since the object of the journey was to establish a motor route between Damascus and Baghdád, Palmer diligently kept a record of time, mileage, latitude and longitude in his note-book. We made frequent stops to get our bearings, and the Major made similar observations. At times the Consul and Major disagreed, and long before the day was over it was quite evident that the Army officer was worried about something.

The automobiles were drawn up abreast, hammocks slung between them with a guard posted close to our bivouac. But I preferred to sleep in one of the cars. Bassam proffered me pillows and a prayer-rug—in addition to one I had brought myself—so bundled up in furs and Oriental rugs, I was soon fast asleep, undisturbed by the cold and the voices of the toiling mechanics.

For special protection I had donned a white sheepskin coat with long Bedouin sleeves, which incidentally I had picked up in the bazaar the previous day for twelve dollars, and a kafieh "Arab head scarf." Besides this, I had taken along my fur coat to wear under my sheepskin the minute the sun went down. Yet this night in the Hamád was the coldest I ever experienced, even in Russia during March. From time to time, my sleep was troubled by the howls of jackals and the thought of the other members of our party slung between the cars in hammocks. Palmer also wore sheepskin—and almost froze in his hammock suspended between the cars.

Daybreak brought cold blasts from over the hill behind which we were encamped. My teeth chattered for a solid hour as we made our hasty toilets out of Schweppes soda bottles, but the pungent odour of

Bedouin coffee, prepared over an open sagebrush fire, gradually aroused me and I was soon stretching myself and pacing up and down before the fire in an only partly successful endeavour to thaw myself out, and to straighten out the kinks tied into my muscles by a night's sleep on the back seat of an automobile under the desert stars.

The Major was already doing the honours for the ladies about his white linen table-cloth on a menu of hard-boiled eggs and the inevitable canned beef, or whatever they brought with them.

Someone handed me a cup of Bedouin coffee, which is comparable to strong black coffee into which some one has accidentally dropped some bitter vetch. Human beings can become accustomed to anything, and after ten years of it I am able to gulp it down in a romantic mood which offsets my utter loathing for the bitterness contained in every drop.

Shortly afterwards we were picking our way through a rock-strewn expanse, when we saw what appeared to be an army of Bedouins a few hundred yards to our left galloping furiously in our direction, their kafilahs flying behind them and their horses kicking up a cloud of dust.

The Consul leaned forward and shouted to the driver: "Go ahead! Faster! Open her up!"

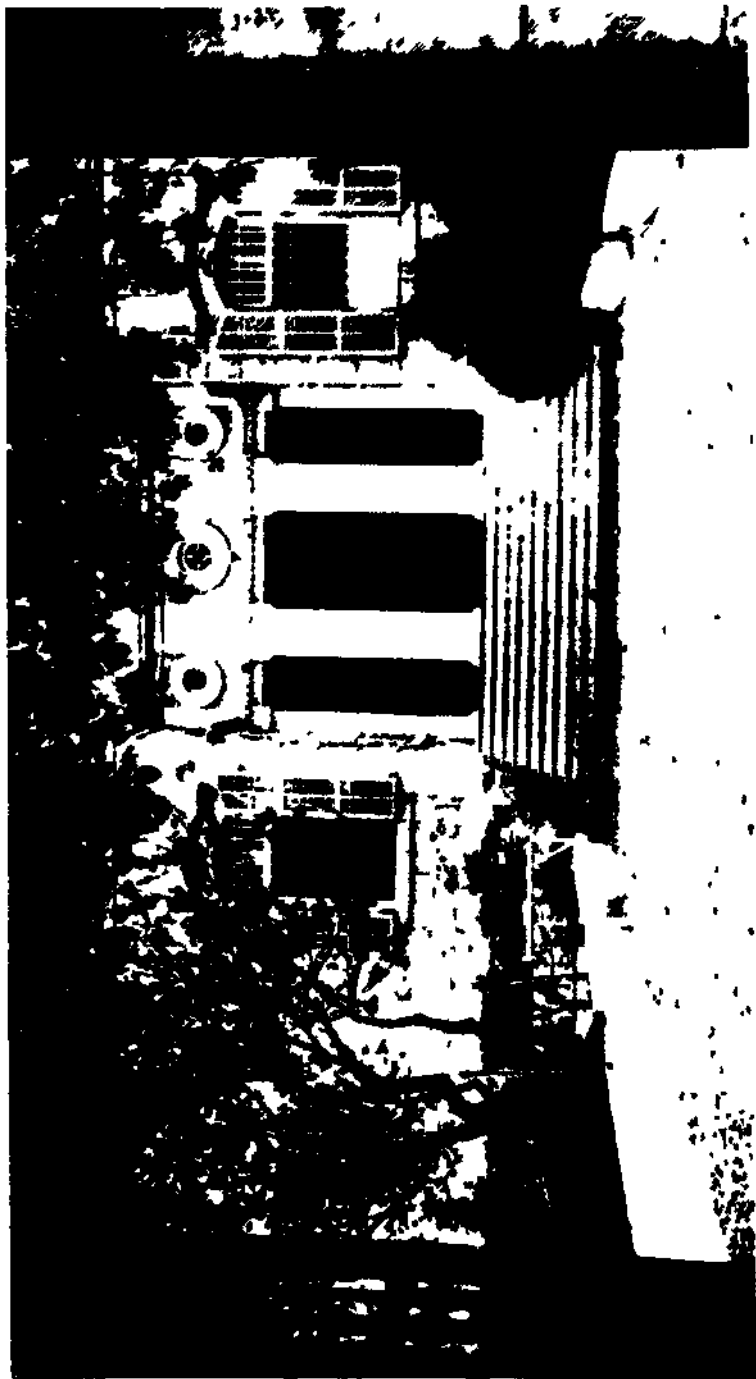
The terrified chauffeur obeyed although it seemed to me in those few seconds of fright the Bedouins had already halved the distance between us and could easily shoot us down with their rifles.

I screamed: "Stop the car!"

"Stop!" I snatched the Consul's stick from his side and brought it down over the bewildered chauffeur's head. The car spun around on the sharp rock before he could gain control and bring it to a stop.

By that time I was already climbing out of the car over the luggage, and, stripping off my kafilah and sheepskin, I snatched my open camera, attempted to focus it, and, with dishevelled curls, stood quaking on the basalt rocks holding my camera in unsteady hands. At their head, sitting a magnificent Arabian horse, rode

HOUSE OF ABDUL I BAHÁ



their shaykh, rifle in hand. Just as the Shaykh pulled up his horse a few yards away, I clicked the shutter. By this time Bassam was standing beside me, and without waiting for further preliminaries, I called out in words which Bassam promptly translated :

"I am from America. I have heard of Bedouin hospitality and having smelled your fragrant coffee as we passed the tents, we hope you will share it with us."

Instantly the stern face of the Shaykh was lighted by a smile. He turned to the men who sat their horses at either side of him, and talked to them animatedly. Then : "Come !"

We followed the galloping horses. Palmer finally climbed out of the car and accompanied me as far as the Shaykh's black goat-hair tent, where the Shaykh's gipsy wife motioned me to a seat beside her on a filthy sheepskin rug. She was dark and thin, and I immediately dubbed her "Queen of Nomad Land." Her large dark eyes fell on the suède leather vanity case, which contained my passport and other accessories, with the glance of a child sighting a new toy. I opened it and she pointed inquiringly at the lipstick.

By means of signs I attempted to explain that, whereas she used kohl to blacken her brows, lids and lashes, I used the other to redden my mouth. Evidently she understood for she immediately began reddening her lips with an imaginary lipstick, laughing gleefully when I nodded approval. In the same manner I demonstrated the use of toothbrush and comb. Her own teeth were dyed henna colour. With a look of admiration she pointed to my teeth, and off went my "Prophylactic."

By means of further signs, the little Bedouin made evident her desire to possess these Western marvels—lipstick, toothbrush and all—so I presented them to her with a ceremonial bow. Her pretty little daughter, decked in gold-coin jewellery, came in and smiled at me. Then, taking two pounds of Syrian silver from my purse, I offered it to my hostess for her daughter, Bassam interpreting for me. Greatly overjoyed, she clapped her hands for coffee, which a servant offered in tiny bowls on a brass tray. Then, from a crude casket,

she extracted two cigarettes. But, anticipating that, in accordance with their custom, she intended to present it to me lighted from her own lips, I hurriedly fished out a cigarette of my own, lit it, and presented it to her before she had time to execute her hospitable but unsavoury intention.

Following coffee, a few minutes later we walked from the Bedouin tent to the waiting car, the British Consul muttering something about God protecting fools and idiots.

The sun had set and the desert grown cold when yellow lights grew visible in the distance.

“Baghdád!”

The chauffeur bore down on the accelerator, and the car leaped forward toward the city whose name had always been a symbol of Oriental romance and mystery since the day I had first spelled my fascinated way through the story of Aladdin. Under a rising crescent moon the clustered lights took dim shape.

CHAPTER XI

AN ARABIAN KNIGHT

AS we neared the Tigris, our progress was slowed down by a procession of camels coming towards us laden with bales and crates, and prodded into action by shadowy figures in abiyehs and turbans. With surly dignity the beasts crossed the pontoon bridge—a train of living barges. Built across circular boats of the type used when Cyrus captured the city for the Persians, the bridge bears the name of the British general Maude. The human beings who cross it in a continuous stream—together with the overloaded pack-mules, camels and motor cars—wear tatters that defy description. Arabs stroll the streets in cream-coloured kafiehhs held to their heads by means of black twisted cotton agals, mullahs in white turbans and brown abas and descendants of Muhammad—both true and false—in their green turbans.

We sped past coffee-houses and wooden stalls thronged with night marauders, past long lines of brass trays heaped with seeds and peppery condiments, merchants weighing food in primitive balance scales, men sitting cross-legged in the mud, roasting cubes of lamb on skewers over charcoal fires, vendors selling shaved ice flavoured with sugar syrup. A glaring electric light piteously revealed a drab coffee-shop from which blared the cracked gramophone thundering out antique American jazz. Such was the Arabian Night's phantasy with which night enfolded Baghdád. At the sound of the horn, dark robed figures rose from their places along the dusty streets, their shadows flickering beneath oil lamps hung overhead.

We finally arrived at the Maude Hotel, where we disentangled ourselves, and were shown to rooms which

were much the same as any small hotel on the outskirts of any town in the Occident.

Imagine my delight to find Monsieur Dreyfus in the lobby of the hotel. He had arrived in Baghdád only that morning, via the mud-holed Aleppo route, six days after he left Damascus. It had taken us twenty-four hours more or less.

Early next morning I rambled through the streets of Aladdin's city. Baghdád boasts several fine mosques whose tall, slender minarets, covered with blue, green or orange tiles, lend a brilliance which makes up for the ugliness of the other buildings that line the dusty roads and narrow, filthy alleys. One readily apparent effect of conquest is the modern highway named New Street. Off-setting the drab streets are the bright colours of the abas worn by the women. The Jewesses swagger along in silk robes of bright pink, pale blue and other vivid colours woven with gold or silver thread. The Arab women wear tarnished black garments, their faces covered with black masks. The Bedouins flaunt a gipsy-like costume of blouse, full skirt, coin necklaces and bracelets and anklets of hollow silver. Everywhere one sees barefooted women with jewelled nose-rings, toe-rings, bracelets and anklets.

After-luncheon conversation at the Maude Hotel gave an added impetus to my curiosity about King Feisal.

"How could I meet him?"

Mr. Palmer's answer seemed almost too easy a solution.

"I have an appointment with His Majesty at four this afternoon. I'll arrange an audience for you if possible."

He did.

At that time King Feisal occupied a large cream-coloured stucco building enclosed by a high wall, which was entered through prison-like gates, guarded by a number of gendarmes. A long veranda ran along the side of the entire building at the second story, overhanging the Tigris and making it a simple matter for one so minded to take a header from the palace into the muddy waters. . . . A romantic setting full of interesting possibilities.



THE ARABIAN KNIGHT, KING ELISAL

We had scarcely entered the large reception-room, luxuriously carpeted with immense Oriental rugs, but furnished otherwise in European style, and I had just dropped into a pile of large, downy cushions when a tallish majestic figure entered noiselessly, his hand outstretched in such an unconventional manner that I knew at once we should become good friends.

With his neatly cut Van Dyke beard and fine features, he presented a perfectly groomed figure. I had been told to expect a cultured and charming personality, but I was surprised to find a man whose ideals were so lofty and universal. At that time I knew little of the background of this King of Iraq, or Mesopotamia to use the pre-war expression.

The conversation at first was general, the Consul, whose Arabic was better than my French, acted as interpreter. King Feisal spoke in a deep, vibrant voice, frequently offering cigarettes from his gold case and pausing to take one himself. According to newspaper accounts which I read later, he smoked between ninety and one hundred cigarettes a day, which certain persons claim hastened his death.

Suddenly the name Bahá'i uttered several times by the King caused me to sit erect. Palmer turned to me somewhat fearfully and in quick *sotto voce* warned me that the subject "Bahá'i" was taboo Muhammadans as Islam would be at a Methodist conference. Then with his suave, official manner he continued:

"His Majesty has heard that you have come from Haifa and inquires after the health of Shoghi Effendi. He says he visited Haifa in 1920 and knew Abbas Effendi (Abdu'l Bahá) very well."

I was instantly charmed. King Feisal spoke at length of Abdu'l Bahá's kindness to him and of his own hopes for universal peace and a united Arabia.

Later I learned (Colonel Lawrence's *Revolt in the Desert*) that Feisal had been a silent leader of the great Arabian revolt. Only a few years before my first audience, in fact, he had been crowned King of Syria at Damascus. Four and one-half months later, however, General Gouroud of France had engineered his over-

throw, inducing Feisal to withdraw his troops from Damascus on a promise that the French Army would likewise retire. No sooner had Feisal complied than Gouroud hired bandits to attack the French Army so that he might shell Damascus in retaliation for the supposed attack. The Syrian King fled to the railway and, under machine-gun fire by Arab troops, who had been falsely informed that their leader had conspired against them, found refuge in a stock car bound for Haifa. By an odd coincidence it was carrying a white donkey to Abdu'l Bahá. The brief stay of the exiled King, who was a true Arabian Knight, at Haifa made him known to Abdu'l Bahá, whose praises of his character brought him into favour with the British Government.

As we talked the King showed considerable interest in the United States and expressed the hope that Arabia might some day be united as he and Lawrence had dreamed.

King Feisal's account of the enlightened views of the Wahabi ruler, Sultan Ibn Saud, and his ideas of human brotherhood and racial unity fired me with a desire to meet this rare idealist in his desert.

I determined that sooner or later I would seek out his fortress-refuge, Nejd in the heart of the Arabian Desert.

The first of four friendly audiences with King Feisal terminated with a keen desire to know him better.

Next day at noon I received a note from Mr. Palmer informing me we had been invited to luncheon at the British Embassy which is located on the other side of the Tigris. The Embassy is the coolest and most delightful spot in Baghdád, set amid trees and overlooking the ancient river from an embankment. The lofty reception hall proved an oasis after the desert heat. The large square reception-room was most artistically draped in chintz and furnished with inlaid Oriental stands upon which highly polished copper and brass trays displayed a carefully selected array of Eastern brasses.

Sir Percy took me in to lunch and placed me on his

right, and next to the newly appointed High Commissioner, Sir Henry Dobbs. Opposite, at the farther end, sat the famous Miss Gertrude Bell. The dining-room was a delight to the eye, its table-centre artistically arranged with huge sweet peas.

It was a delightful luncheon. A more charming hostess than Lady Cox cannot be found. Later while strolling through the Embassy gardens, Sir Henry said :

"You seem to be rather bucked up over this question of the Bahá'i Movement."

"I am. Are you acquainted with it?" I asked.

"I have read several of the books," he replied.

"Well, have you any opinion?" I asked eagerly.

"It is rather full of platitudes, is it not?"

"My dear Sir Henry, could one not say the same of the Sermon on the Mount? If truth is one, and not indivisible, then could not all self-evident truth be said to be in the form of platitudes?"

Fortunately it was not necessary for Sir Henry to answer at the moment. We had reached the ostriches, and a hungry creature stretched its long neck for an orange, which the avid bird gulped down as though it had been a grape.

There are those who have thoughtlessly said that the Bahá'i Teaching has repeated statements that have been frequently made and always will be truth without interruption, while there are volumes of truth in this Teaching that has never been uttered before.

After a pleasant motor launch ride down the Tigris, my hostess invited me to see her collection of beautiful Arabian abas—formed each of two single strips of heavy silk woven by hand, with thread of gold and silver.

"And now for a shopping trip!"

We sauntered through the textile quarter on bargains bent. Tall and dignified, her fine head crowned with snow-white hair, and wearing a white flannel skirt and silk sweater, Lady Cox made an unforgettable figure in the bazaars of Baghdád. In fact, the instant they saw her approaching, those of the merchants who had

been caught unawares, dropped their shutters and pretended they had closed shop for the day.

"I've a reputation for being a close bargainer," smiled Lady Cox. "But one must not be robbed. They respect you more if you beat them at their own game and they have nothing but contempt for the Fransawi (every Western European who isn't Italian or Spanish is a Frenchman here) who pay the ridiculously exorbitant prices they demand."

A half-hour later I understood why the merchants attempted to fold up their stalls and silently steal away at our approach. After a minute inspection of scores of pieces, I selected two exquisite abas, both lavishly woven with thread of gold, representative of months of skilled work. I expected their purchase to make a considerable dent in my budget, but they were well worth whatever I would have to pay.

Lady Cox asked me for forty-five rupees and planked it down before the protesting merchant. In my ignorance I might well have parted with twice that amount. Before he could utter a word she informed him that he could take the money and turn over the abas or we should immediately leave the shop. Then, without waiting for his reply, she handed the abas to me and we made a triumphant exit with our treasure, leaving the money on the platform. It was the first time I had ever witnessed a European obtain an article from an Oriental merchant at her own price, or at any price without interminable haggling. Lady Cox sets her own price and walks off with the desired object—thus accounting for the sudden slamming of wooden shutters, which I had at first thought due to the holidays—Friday for the Moslems, Saturday for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians.

As we rambled through the bazaars, we came to the brass shops where artisans were pounding trays and other receptacles, using wooden hammers and other instruments. I spotted a beautiful tray, handsomely carved and inlaid with silver and copper. This we bought for a song. I found later that the inscription in Arabic coincided with the exact date of the appearance

of the forerunner of the Bahá'i Faith, 1844, or 1260 in the Islamic calendar.

In the goldsmiths' and silversmiths' quarter, my hostess ordered a silver armlet made for me from melted rupees. I found in my bag a sketch that had been given me in Haifa—the Bahá'i House of Worship, which was being built near Chicago on the shores of Lake Michigan. The silversmith, a slender little man with beautifully chiselled Aryan features, examined the picture with considerable curiosity. Lady Cox completed the negotiations and, when we returned six hours later, I received the exquisitely hammered silver armlet, with camels, mosques, and sailing feluccas on the Euphrates and Tigris etched and inset with black enamel, for the munificent sum of twenty-five rupees (eight dollars).

I questioned the silversmith, who spoke English, about himself.

"Are you a Moslem?"

"Certainly not," he replied, "I am a John the Baptist."

"Oh, a Baptist, I see. Then you are a Christian?"

"Certainly not! I am a follower of John the Baptist."

"But aren't all followers of John the Baptist Christians?"

He shook his head vigorously.

"No, indeed!"

Then, in answer to further interrogations, he disclosed that he was one of about sixty workers in silver in Baghdád who claim descent from the original followers of John the Baptist. He explained that Jesus came to Jerusalem, but His ancestors refused to accept Him as the Messiah foretold by their leader. Fixing his gentle brown eyes upon mine with a look that gave his cameo face an expression of nobility and infinite patience, he continued:

"You see, the Messiah is not yet come!"

CHAPTER XII

FROM BABYLON TO LEBANON

SIR PERCY COX placed his "private car" at the Consul's disposal to continue his vacation trip to Babylon, whereupon I decided not to miss such an opportunity as this, of enjoying the unusual privilege of digging about in the excavations at Babylon being carried out by the University of Pennsylvania and the British Museum. The private car, which I had been picturing as a sumptuous affair, turned out to be one of the ordinary coaches seen throughout Iraq and Burma—a long car with leather seats on both sides, a stationary table at either end, narrow doors on either side and a wash room. Yet, compared with the cars used by the public in Mesopotamia it could well be described as private.

The train was drawn by a very antiquated bit of locomotion. The moment we set foot out of our *private* car, nine Arabs sprang up from the desert and snatched at our lunch box, each yanking it in a different direction in a desperate effort to earn his baksheesh. We rescued what was possible, then sat down on the sands and lunched in hilarious amusement surrounded by a group of curious Arabs.

In the distance we could see the supposed ruins of the Tower of Babel rising from the crest of a *tor*.

Mounted on donkeys and escorted by our Arab guides, we made our way amid broken pillars, huge monoliths, and piles of earth over the site of the great wall with its gates of brass, the hanging gardens and palaces which imagination ascribe variously to Nineveh and Babylon; the ancient marriage market, the wicked precinct of Myletta, where the virgins were initiated into the mysteries by the first man to toss a piece of silver into

their laps ; the royal palace, the temple of Bel where its ambitious priests read the stars and plotted against the king.

With two sticks I poked about in all that remains to mark what Herodotus once described as the world's most magnificent city. With almost my first effort I unearthed a brick, about four by seven inches, bearing a symbol which was later verified in New York as the seal of Nebuchadnezzar. It was a perfect specimen of a brick from the palace of the once mighty king whose grass-eating exploits are mentioned in the Old Testament.

Somewhere near here had stood the marriage market, where the wealthiest men in pagan days had bid against each other for the hand of the most beautiful maidens. Not to the brave, but as ever to the rich, had gone the fair in those plutocratic and wicked times. As Herodotus records it, the maidens were auctioned off in the descending order of pulchritude, the poor or parsimonious getting a chance only at the marital leavings and the pot being sweetened—so to speak—for the ugliest and last to be bid on. Thus, instead of paying for the privilege of marriage, the thrifty bargainer might wait and acquire a remnant mate without expending a penny and with a dowry thrown in. For the money bid for the most beautiful was distributed as a dowry or bonus to go with the most ugly, it was an ill-favoured wench indeed who failed to find a husband of some kind.

The discovery of two dainty, baked-clay oil-lamps still bearing soot on their spouts, a couple of water jars, about fifteen inches high and six inches in diameter, hung on finely wrought chains, and two clay discs recording the receipt of rent money from some ancient landlord completed my investigation into archæological lore.

I had mapped out a trip to Tihrán, capital of Persia, but suddenly the old feeling of the purposeness of my life returned. In Baghdád and Damascus, except for the change in background, my activities were only minor variations of the boredom which had previously over-

taken me at home. Dinner engagements, luncheon dates, teas, cocktail parties at the club, motor-launch rides down the Tigris instead of the Hudson. A drive through the Lebanons instead of the Catskills. A camel jaunt in the Sahara instead of a horseback canter through Central Park.

My life had become occupied once more with thrills, and excitement, and in their pursuit lay only a substitute for happiness. Only once had I found the tranquillity I craved, and that was in the little city of Haifa. Though Persia had long been the goal of my dreams, it must wait.

"I am going back to Haifa to talk things over with Shoghi Effendi," I announced during dinner to the surprised British Consul.

"Well, I'm starting back across the desert to Palmyra to-morrow," he said. "Come along!"

"Splendid!" Besides putting me within a few hours of Haifa this would enable me to reach Damascus in time to attend a Ramazan dinner with Mr. Palmer—the elaborate feast with which Moslems break their fast on the eve of the first and last day of Ramazan, the month of fasting—comparable to Lent of the Christian calendar.

Muhammad Bassam remained in Baghdád, where he hoped to start the first transportation line by lorry across the Hamád to Damascus and Beyrout. But his chauffeur knew the route back to Damascus via Homs.

We left Baghdád shortly after dawn, headed westward. We had just crossed the Euphrates and were about to lunch on "Baghdád sandwiches" at a village close by, when a friendly shaykh rode up on a camel and invited us to join him in a feast that was being prepared for Arabian guests. With the Shaykh standing on the running-board, we drove to the scene of festivity, where my eyes fell on the huge carcass of an animal being turned on a large spit over a blazing fire. I shall not easily forget the odour of sizzling flesh. The feast was being served alfresco, on rugs on the sand.

Our host immediately came forward and, with polite gestures, beckoned us to seats of honour on a large Oriental rug. He uttered a command to one of his

servants, who immediately gouged out the bulging eyes of the animal and offered these choice titbits to myself and the Consul. He then supplied us with spoons, and requested me to help myself to what was considered the most choice portion, the centre of the eye socket.

The roasted eye, staring fixedly upward at me from the centre of my plate, did not improve my appetite. The Consul's sentiments appeared to coincide with my own. So, explaining that we had very recently partaken of a heavy breakfast, we excused ourselves as rapidly as courtesy permitted and departed, much to the disappointment of our generous-hearted host. Charles Lamb's story of roast pork came forcibly to my mind as we raced across the shining desert.

We detoured to visit the classic ruins of Palmyra not far from Homs. From the surrounding hills the elaborate marble columns look down upon the ruins of the Temple of the Sun God—Samas or Bel. It is nearly seventeen centuries ago since this great commercial city, developed by Zenobia, who extended her dead husband's realm over Syria into Egypt, encountered the rivalry of Rome. After a rout of his armies by this courageous ruler Aurelian besieged Palmyra for two years, cutting off her supplies. He captured Zenobia and her sons to grace his triumph in Rome, then destroyed the city and slaughtered its population when they attempted to revolt. Zenobia, forced to participate in the triumphal procession, followed the African elephants, the lions, tigers and monkeys, queenly dignity unruffled, walked barefoot, majestic and courageous, despite defeat.

We pottered around the ancient ruins, wondering over the ability of the widowed queen to convert a city state into an empire. At the tomb of Odænathus, Zenobia's murdered husband, an open door revealed a shaft with crumbling stone steps in its side. There were about fifteen steps down which we crawled with difficulty into the murky vault below—lined on either side with sarcophagi that had long since been dispossessed of their contents. In a corner of the most imposing one at the left I noticed a small disc-like object. I climbed into the sarcophagus and went headlong on my ear in the dust-

laden coffin. When we emerged into the bright sunlight, we examined the porous disc, and decided it had been somebody's knee-cap.

Several French officers arrived on the scene from the military camp not very far distant and assured us that the sarcophagus from which I had extracted the porous bone was none other than that of Odænathus. I left Palmyra with what I believed to be Zenobia's husband's knee-cap in my vanity case.

The city of Homs, noted mainly for its antiquity, proved of little interest, save that it had been the actual scene of Zenobia's defeat. Calling upon the Governor, we met a young Syrian poet, who joined our little party to visit Hama and Beyrout, where he had decided to spend a few days before returning to Damascus. He was bearded like Shakespeare's "pard," had large, soulful brown eyes, delicate features and a slim physique. His English was perfect and he entertained us with recitations of his verse and an account of his romantic marriage to an American girl from St. Louis. Just how they had met is a bit vague. At any rate he planned to sail from Beyrout to New York the following week to join her. He produced a post card he had just received from his wife, acknowledging receipt of a photograph he had sent her displaying his newly cultivated beard.

The card read: "Darling, it may be very smart over there, but shave off that 'cooty garage' before you arrive here."

We arrived in Beyrout after a long but thrilling adventure.

Mr. Palmer left for Damascus. I decided to motor through the winding paths of the Lebanon Mountains, whose snow-capped peaks, rising to an altitude of nine thousand feet, beckoned beyond the city walls.

Near the hotel I encountered a swarthy Arab seated at the wheel of a brand new Ford. After the usual bargaining, the driver discovered that his victim for the day was able to drive. He put the wheel into my willing hands and we were off to Tyre, whence King Hiram and his lumberjacks once shipped the giant cedars for Solomon's temple.

We flopped and bounced over the uneven mountain road at a rate of fifty miles an hour, past villages of luxurious summer homes and gardens filled with flowers of rare beauty and exotic fragrance. It is said that most of the cedars of Lebanon have long been stripped away, but we found groves as thick as any of the Adirondacks, and rumbled along beneath their majestic branches. After watching me take the sharp curves in the road without slowing up—a trick I had learned on the winding Mohawk Trail—my chauffeur suddenly turned the key, shutting off the ignition, and put it in his pocket.

My angry glare had no effect on him.

"What is the idea?" I demanded.

"Madam," replied the Arab excitedly, "I was thinking about my new car."

Whereupon we changed places, and the rest of the journey was made with no discernible improvement in the driving, and with what seemed to me a deliberate attempt to put me in my place, figuratively speaking, by hitting every one of the potato-sized cobblestones that cover the road to Tyre.

"This is rough enough to shake even you out of your pet prejudices," I remarked.

When we finally arrived at Tyre we found that, in fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel, it had indeed become "a place of desolation and for the spreading of nets." Only a few low stone huts, frame houses, a shabby hotel and a row of nondescript shops struggled to remain standing on either side of the single street. The little town has less than six thousand inhabitants and has shrunk to a position of insignificance. As we motored to the red sand shore of the Mediterranean we came upon half-dozen figures huddled about a drying net, silent and motionless in the sunshine. Beyond, broken masses of masonry projected into the sea, remnants perhaps of the mole which Alexander extended to the then island city he was besieging. Nothing remains to remind the visitor of the former might of Tyre, of the Tyrrhenian purple and silks which its merchants exchanged with kings and queens for gold. The harbour where once its fleet rode is full of silt. Sand has formed about the

mole so that the great island city of antiquity was no longer even an island. What a job of destruction was wrought by Alexander!

At a grove nearby we stopped to purchase, for a few pennies, a basket of locquats and oranges. Farther on, we came to Sidon the Great, once the principal city of the Phœnicians, now a town of ten thousand inhabitants clustered about a castle on a promontory. Older than Tyre, it has thundered to the tread of many a conquering army since the Philistines first destroyed its fleet and burned its buildings. Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks, Syrians, Romans, Crusaders, Saracens, Mongols and finally, British, in 1918, have besieged, bombarded and invested it.

Now its only importance lies in its orange, lemon, apricot and banana orchards. Its past is preserved in its archaeological museum. But I had little time to give it the inspection it doubtless deserved, and we were soon bumping back over the pebbled road to Beyrout. My last impression of these ancient Phœnician seaports was the flavour of the oranges and locquats, far juicier than those of California, with which I supplemented my luncheon as we turned southward through the Lebanons. Small, sweeter and of a more delicate flavour than those of Jaffa, the oranges are too thin skinned for exportation. Neglect has denied these ancient centres of commerce the boon of trading in the fruits of their own orchards.

With the white-topped Lebanons forming a background and the blue Mediterranean sparkling at its feet, Beyrout is the jewel, as well as the chief seaport of Syria. Its bay is named after St. George in token of his supposed slaying of the dragon here. Despite its numberless changes of rule—pagan, Moslem and Christian—it has remained prosperous. Its American University, its Christian mission schools and seminaries, are as renowned throughout the Near East as was the Roman Hall of learning, where its professors drew up part of the second code of Justinian's law or taught the great Thaumaturgus.

It was Dr. Harvey Jessup, the President of Beyrout University, speaking before the "Parliament of Religions" at the World's Fair held in Chicago in 1893, who

was among the first to acquaint the Western world with Bahá'u'lláh.

Accompanied by some American tourists, I detoured to Tripoli, a small city near Beyrout.

We arrived at midnight, while a great festival was in progress, and watched the scene of drunken mob violence from the upper balcony of the hotel. Everywhere hung fluttering paper banners, street sideshows, and displays similar to that at our Mardi Gras—only tawdry and cheap. Nice people do not go abroad during this riot, I was told, for it is dangerous and lasts most of the night.

It was a glorious spring day, with cool breezes blowing up from the sea as I turned my back on Beyrout and headed for Damascus to attend the Ramazan dinner to which I hoped to be invited.

CHAPTER XIII

A RAMAZAN DINNER

A RAMAZAN dinner in Damascus, beneath a star-studded sky, is something not to be sneezed at, particularly when the host is Emir Kader, hospitable grandson of the late King of Algiers.

Women are never permitted at these dinners, a circumstance which made me all the more eager to attend.

After being presented to my host, he showed me his beautiful collection of medals in a special room crammed with rare relics, including a very ornate sword given to his grandfather by Napoleon, and the jewel-handled rifle presented this same ancestor by Queen Victoria. In another room fitted like a lodge, the Emir, who is a great hunter, pointed out his favourite trophies—great horned heads, elephants' feet and ivory tusks. Then, pointing to a huge shell which had been used during the World War, he remarked :

"You see this shell? I had it beautifully carved, as you see, and made into a work of art. When the supposedly civilized nations do likewise, the world will be a safer and more beautiful place in which to live."

A vivid reminder from an Algerian gentleman.

When we reached the charming court with its beautiful marble fountain, about thirty men had gathered and were eagerly awaiting the return of their host. Among them were several mullahs and other men of prominence who did not appear too pleased.

Unlike Lent, the month of Ramazan imposes complete abstinence from food, drink and tobacco every day from sunrise to sunset, only the immature, those over seventy, the pregnant and travellers being exempt. The fast, which is regarded as a period of physical, but chiefly spiritual, purification was commanded by Muhammad

to commemorate his revelation of the Koran after a period of fasting.

Unlike the Moslems at Meshed, in Persia, who spend the night of Ramazan eating, drinking, singing gay songs and carousing so that they may sleep through the period of abstinence, the Moslems of Syria take their fast seriously. I could see that the men were rabid to get at the food, even if a woman had to be present.

At any rate, the Emir seated me to his right at the banquet table, next to the British Consul and directly in front of a beautifully arranged floral design of tiny pink rosebuds laid on shiny green leaves so as to spell "Welcome." I knew the greeting was not meant for me, but it was "Welcome," anyhow, and lovely.

At length the boom of a cannon fired from the military barracks proclaimed the arrival of sunset, the chant of unseen muezzins arose from the city's minarets, and simultaneously a corps of robed servants marched into the court bearing tiny glasses of wine and plates of fried fish, fried chicken liver, olives, cucumbers and circles of unleavened bread, thin as cigarette paper, and sprinkled with seeds.

"When you give me wine, shout in my ears: Here is wine!" the Emir quoted to me from the Persian poet. "I can feel the glass, taste the wine and smell it. Let my sense of hearing also partake of the pleasure."

He handed me a fragile liquor glass, took one for himself and, sipping it, I helped him break the fast of Ramazan. The Moslem drinks but little, a pint of liquor sufficing for ten people. But the fragility of the wine glass is a matter of pride with the Arabian or Syrian host who believes it is as important that the dishes he uses be beautiful, as that the food should be delicious. Consequently, the Emir was flattered when someone quoted a quatrain which ran something like this:

"The glass is pure. The wine is pure
So transparent and fine
That I am puzzled to distinguish
Wine from glass, glass from wine."

"It is lucky that we are not Shi-ites," remarked my host, who is himself a Sunnite, in reference to the fact

that the Shi-ite sect do not count the day, and consequently the fast, done until the first evening stars appear.

Our appetites whetted on hors d'œuvre, the servants kept up a constant procession, bringing in platter after platter of delicious viands—roast chickens and ducks, a half-dozen varieties of rice, some with saffron and aromatic herbs; a dozen vegetables, melons, fresh figs, dates, apricots, pomegranates and other fruits, sherbets and ices and a dozen or more rich pastries. I counted twenty-five courses!

At midnight when I was back in the hotel lying in bed and attempting to digest my twenty-five courses, feeling much as I imagine a cobra must feel after swallowing a lamb, the cannon boomed again, this time as a signal to prepare for the last meal of the night. This was followed by the sounds of criers as they stopped at the darkened door of each house to awaken the somnolent occupants by their lusty chanting, punctuated by four drumbeats at regular intervals.

“O Akmed (Boom, boom, boom, boom).” I could hear. “Get up and praise God! (Boom, boom, boom, boom.) Arise and commemorate God. (Boom, boom, boom, boom.)”

I could trace the voices and drumbeats of these promenading alarm clocks from house to house until in fancy I saw the lights flickering and the women stirring about preparing for the midnight meal. An hour later, when everyone was supposed to have eaten, came a third boom of the cannon.

Having gourmandized enough for a week and vainly wishing I had not sampled those last six varieties of pastries, I decided that it would take a lot more than a battery of cannon and a regiment of drummers to summon me to another meal.

The motor ride from Damascus to Beyrout is over a precipitous winding road. Only a few days previous an American consul had been driven over the side of the mountain by a reckless Arab driver. From Beyrout I set out by motor for Haifa, a journey of three and one-half hours.

Shortly after sunset my eyes again beheld Mount



VIEW FROM MT. CARMEL LOOKING TOWN AT THE GERMAN COLONY,
SAID TO BE THE AVENUE OF THE MILLERITES

Carmel. It was illuminated by a great arc light—the gift of a Wall Street broker, who, I was later told, had also found reality here. An American electrician had spent a year installing it as his contribution. The light, which could be seen far out in the Mediterranean, had been placed there in partial fulfilment of the prophecy made by Abdu'l Bahá forty-five years ago, that a great beacon light would be placed at the Tomb of the Báb, a great highway would be built between Akka and Haifa, and—little Haifa would become the chief port of Palestine.

Bumping along the seashore in the rickety car, I watched the tiny sailing vessels at rest in the harbour. It seemed hard to believe that the rest of the prophecy would ever be fulfilled. Yet, two years later I watched British engineers surveying the course of the Haifa-Akka highway.

In 1933 I saw it under construction and, looking down into the bay from the Tomb of the Báb, I counted twenty-seven ocean liners. On my last world tour I picked up the rotogravure section of an American newspaper in the Island of Maui, Hawaii, to find an entire page given over to pictures of “Haifa—the new port of Palestine.”

Articles describing it as becoming the “Centre of a New Phœnicia—a meeting-place of international trade included such tributes as comparing it with the world’s beauty spots, and stating: “If one viewpoint more than any other is chosen it would be the Persian Garden planted around the Tomb of the Báb. . . .”

Through the gathering gloom I rumbled through the narrow, winding streets of the town, in which lights were beginning to flicker into life, to the foot of the beacon-lit mountain slope. I had come back! There were so many things I wanted to know, so much I wanted to ask, and here I felt my questions would be answered.

Passing through the high iron gates into the peaceful gardens, I became conscious of the law and order pervading all. The buildings and spacious grounds with their shaven lawns, pebbled paths and well-trimmed borders; the terraces leading to the shrines basking in the

brilliant sunshine on the side of Mount Carmel, all proclaimed the gentle strength of Shoghi Effendi's guiding hand. A strange contrast to the old Jerusalem so short a distance away.

And there at the entrance of the Pilgrim house stood little Fugeta, his smiling face welcoming me home.

CHAPTER XIV

AKKA'S FORTRESS

VISITORS and inquirers at Haifa represent a veritable cross-section of humanity. If anyone doubted that ever the "lion and the lamb would lie down together," as the symbology of the Bible puts it, proof of the unifying power of the Prophet of God is daily in evidence there. Just as Jesus gathered about him Jew, Roman, Syrian, Copt and welded them into one consciousness by His dynamic love, so the utterance of Bahá'u'lláh has fructified into a spiritual unity Christians of every nationality and sect, Moslems, Parsees, Jews, etc., as the guests at Haifa showed.

Shoghi Effendi, perpetuating Abdu'l Bahá's daily custom, spent every luncheon-time with his guests, answering their multitudinous questions on every possible subject, his answers never dallying with the issue but seizing the fundamental point, stripping all superfluity from his simple, direct analysis.

Someone would state their conviction that, on the "in-dwelling God" assumption, each human being could evolve to perfection.

"Abdu'l Bahá says humanity will evolve and develop infinitely," was Shoghi Effendi's reply. "To reach perfection, however, means that advancement stops. There is nothing further to be obtained. Mankind will ever continue his development towards perfection."

Asked as to the "mystery" surrounding the Prophets of God, he said:

"A mystery is not irrational. It does not run counter to reason; it transcends reason!"

"You mean," questioned Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler, a brilliant American Bahá'i, "that just as science sees

a mystery in the great primal energy becoming ninety-two elements?"

"No," he answered. "The mystery of nature may later become manifest. A spiritual mystery can never be grasped by the human mind."

Someone mentioned the League of Nations and asked his opinion as to its value.

"The principle underlying the League of Nations may break, but the institution will develop, whether the League or another. This change will be brought about by the coming war, which is inevitable. This is not my predicting. Abdu'l Bahá stated in 1920 that the chaotic state of the world would bring about another war. He also warned the world similarly in 1912. As I have written in *The Goal of the New World Order*, the outcome of the last war, its greatest lesson, was the bringing about of the League, but this instrument is not functioning in a manner to bring about universal peace."

Shoghi Effendi warned us against rigidity, forms and regulations, and said we might as well remember the words of St. Augustine: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, diversity; in all things, charity." Then he continued:

"The Administrative Order" (present form of development of the World Order of Bahá'u'lláh) is merely the instrument to train Bahá'is in a methodical manner to be prepared for the establishment of the International House of Justice. A pattern for future society, without which we would have chaos instead of order and unity."

The keynote ever reiterated in this Faith is "Unity." The more I gathered this into my own consciousness, the easier it became to forget my own small problems. They melted away in the sense of harmony, order and unity which infuses the very air at Haifa.

The next morning we motored over the wind-strewn dunes to Bahjé, a few miles from the frowning fortress of Akka, to visit the tomb of Bahá'u'lláh.

The spring sunshine lay warm on the red geraniums, the exotic tropical trees and the towering cypresses, as we walked through the gate in the high wall surrounding



ANCIENT HOUSE OCCUPIED BY ABDUL BAHÁ AFTER HIS
RELEASE FROM THE FORTRESS WHILST STILL A PRISONER
IN THE PRISON CITY OF AKKA

the Moorish building, whose stucco walls rose from a cloistered foundation of high Moorish arches.

We entered through an iron door older than time, climbed a long flight of stairs, and found ourselves in a central rotunda or hall illuminated by a glass roof and surrounded on every side by smaller rooms. In one was kept Bahá'i literature, translated into no less than twenty-five or more languages—the voluntary contribution of scholars of different countries. It is an astonishing fact that this teaching has been established the world over in less than fifty years by American and European and Persian travellers, all of whom were economically independent, and whose only remuneration has been the joy and happiness they have found in this service.

A brass plate on the wall to the right of a doorway hung with a velvet curtain designated it as the room where the eminent scholar, E. Granville Browne, professor of Arabic and fellow of Pembroke College of Cambridge University and an authority on Persian literature and history, had paid his memorable visit to Bahá'u'lláh in 1890.

Professor Brown had written :

" Though I dimly suspected whither I was going and whom I was to behold (for no distinct intimation had been given to me), a second or two elapsed ere, with a throb of wonder and awe, I became definitely conscious that the room was not untenanted. . . .

" The face of him on whom I gazed I can never forget, though I cannot describe it. Those piercing eyes seemed to read one's very soul ; power and authority sat on that ample brow. . . . No need to ask in whose presence I stood, as I bowed myself before one who is the object of a devotion and love which kings might envy and emperors sigh for in vain !

" A mild, dignified voice bade me be seated, and then continued :

" " Thou hast come to see a prisoner and an exile. . . . We desire but the good of the world and the happiness of the nations . . . that all nations should become one in faith and all men as brothers ; that all bonds of affection and unity between the sons of men

should be strengthened ; that diversity of religion should cease and differences of races be annulled . . . and yet so shall it be ; these fruitless strifes, these ruinous wars shall pass away and the most great peace shall come. . . . Is this not that which Christ foretold ? . . .

“ ‘ Let not a man glory in this, that he loves his country ; let him rather glory in this, that he loves his kind. . . . ’ ”

“ Such, so far as I can recall them, were the words which, besides many others, I heard from Bahá. Let those who read them consider well with themselves whether such doctrines merit death and bonds, and whether the world is more likely to gain or lose by their diffusion.”

Full of a sense of calm beauty, I was escorted out of the building and through the adjoining gardens.

The glass-roofed building adjoining the Tomb was like an immense greenhouse. A large square, occupying the centre of the room was luxuriant with a myriad climbing plants. Around the walls ran aisles covered with fine Oriental rugs, gifts from Bahá'is in different parts of the world. We walked to a doorway in the opposite wall and, over a raised threshold strewn with yellow jasmine blossoms, gazed into the Tomb.

The flickering lights or brass lamps and candelabra of exquisite workmanship cast their patterned shadows on a “ Khurasan ” rug of gold and silken thread.

Six feet beneath the cement floor lay the mortal remains of Bahá'u'lláh—Bahá'u'lláh, whose ninth grandfather was Jesse the father of David, and whose descent can be traced directly to Abraham.

Soft lights and shadows played a melody of peace in Oriental colour !

I knelt at the threshold as the clear, vibrant voice of Shoghi Effendi prayed for the unity of mankind.

Still entranced, I passed from this hallowed shrine out into the warm sunshine. I walked thoughtfully over the soft green lawn and over pebbled paths bordered with high banks of geraniums in brilliant bloom, towards a row of slender cypress trees grown to regal height. Through a low gate and up four or five steps I passed

into a room opening off the gardens. Here I rested, listening to the birds calling softly one to another. It was here that the British general, Lord Allenby, had come to pay homage to Abdu'l Bahá for the service he had rendered when he fed the starving civilians and soldiers with wheat he himself had grown and stored at Tiberias, thus averting a threatened revolt.

The following day we visited the fortress of Akka, our remittance having been arranged through the British governor, by Shoghi Effendi. The stormpoint that lasted for centuries between the Christians and Saracens, this stronghold was besieged by Napoleon, and since the World War had been converted into a hospital.

We drove through one formidable gate, walked through another into the courtyard and crossed to the cell where Bahá'u'lláh had been imprisoned in 1868 by the Turkish Government. We peered through the barred door at the bleak, windowless room. The damp smell of the prison reached our nostrils. How horrible this place must have been during Bahá'u'lláh's long incarceration!

The two rooms on the second floor later occupied by Bahá'u'lláh and his family had been set aside as a memorial by the British Government. Through one of the windows the sapphire Bay of Akka stretched leftward in magnificent panorama. To the right lay the stone wall of the Crusaders with the deep blue of the Mediterranean beyond.

Through the other window Bahá'u'lláh had looked out upon the Crusader's wall, the crumbling walls of the old city and the road which the Persian Pilgrims had trod with bare feet in the vain hope of catching a glimpse of Him. On the plain outside in the third moat they would stand watching the windows of His prison. With sorrowful eyes He had beheld them.

A cool breeze blew through the paneless, barred windows. In the distance the cypress trees bowed gracefully. The lapping of the sea against the wall beat a weird lament.

When Akka had held the worst criminals of the

Turkish Empire, the cells of the barracks had been filthy and devoid of beds or other furnishings. The food had been so scant and unpalatable that prisoners who could afford it begged for permission to buy their own. Malaria and other diseases had stricken some, among them eighty-odd Bahá'is—men, women and children. To provide a decent burial for two followers who had died, Bahá'u'lláh had given his own rug to the soldiers to sell. Instead of giving him the proceeds they had kept it and thrown the bodies into a hole in the ground.

During the period of affliction, Bahá'u'lláh, in serene faith, had written his friends: "Fear not. These doors shall be opened. My tent shall be pitched on Mount Carmel."

With the rise of the Young Turks in 1908, all political and religious prisoners were automatically released and Abdu'l Hamid II himself was thrown into prison.

The incarceration of Abdu'l Hamid II marked the end of the old order in Turkey. His despotism left Turkey the "Sick Man of Europe" until the rise of Kemal Pasha, which began a new and enlightened era—the Turkey of to-day.

A mobilization of Turkish troops took over the barracks and all religious and political prisoners were released.

As Shoghi Effendi spoke of Bahá'u'lláh then, and the following day as he bade me farewell, there was nothing insistent, nothing dogmatic, in the words of this remarkable Guardian of a New World Order.

CHAPTER XV

THE WALL CRUMBLES

I HAD left Haifa! I had bade farewell to those who had opened for me the gates of a new world—a world full of radiant vistas of what life could mean. I had departed sad at heart, yet stirred with a great urge to spread the glorious message I had so fortuitously received.

Days at sea gave me the leisure to read, to reflect, to plan. . . . I arrived in America radiantly happy.

I had tapped the source of Reality, a reality beside which nothing else mattered. I had drawn nearer to God, the at-last realized object of my search.

The English philosopher Paley, in his celebrated analogy, argued that there can no more be a world, with its infinitely intricate mechanical laws, without a Maker, than there can be a watch with its relatively simple mechanism, without a Watchmaker. As the French philosopher Voltaire put it, if there had been no God, it would have been necessary to invent one.

Mysteriously in Haifa I had found the great watchmaker and the logically necessary First Cause. The old warfare between science and religion—the attitude which has made some of our most brilliant scholars the slaves, instead of the masters, of their intellect, no longer plagued me.

A paragraph from Max Flank, inventor of the quantum theory, clarified for me from a world scientist's point of view what I had emotionally felt: "There can never be any real opposition between religion and science; for the one is the complement of the other. Every serious and reflective person realizes, I think, that the

religious element in his nature must be recognized and cultivated if all the powers of the human soul are to act together in perfect harmony." I felt I was swiftly approaching that balance and harmony.

My very first attempt on the voyage home to share the good news earned me chilly politeness and once or twice a definite impression that I had registered as some kind of a wild-dream artist.

The smug self-satisfaction of one highly successful "self-made" business man almost exasperated me beyond words.

"Peace and brotherhood," he snorted. "My dear lady, we've always had war and always will have it. It's a biological urge."

"So are a lot more things we've learned to grow out of," I retorted. "We'll have war just as long as you men want it—so long as it piles millions into your pockets from armaments manufacturing and their trade. One day, perhaps like the Trojan women, women of the twentieth century all over the world will wake up, to look with clear eyes through this rubbish of false patriotism that you jingoistic capitalists use as propaganda in your controlled press, to work up war hysteria over nothing. What if women decide to fight your "Biological" urge with biology, and refuse to go through the agony of child-bearing and the sacrifices of child-rearing solely to produce more and more cannon fodder? You know there is such a thing as birth control, growing more popular every hour."

"Nonsense! That's race suicide!"

"What's war? Wholesale suicide and merciless slaughter."

"I have always said," broke in a suave, good-humoured voice, "that the last war will be fought between the sexes and it will be worth waging for the joy of the peace demonstration afterwards," and with a fat chuckle at his own witticism, a charming and brilliant young lawyer took my arm and drew me into a deck promenade. "Come," said he, "you must meet some friends of mine." He looked slyly at my late opponent. "Nice people, really nice people."

He introduced me to a beautiful young woman and her fiancé, almost the only responsive ones, and they became intensely interested.

"What do you think of world conditions?" I asked.

"Well, if there is another war I doubt whether the old men will find enough youth to fight it for them!" he answered promptly. "The ancient idea of things is just about over."

Following the pugnacious and loquacious war fiend the mental apathy and cynicism of the others, I was delighted to meet vibrant and wideawake people with vision. The young woman joined in the conversation. Far into the night and the early morning hours we discussed the old world order that is passing and the new that is just beyond to-morrow's dawn. I spoke of what I had learned at Haifa and they listened hour after hour on the deck beneath a shining moon. The last news I had was that the young man, convinced of the truth of these teachings, was writing a book—*Future Civilisation*.

My lawyer's co-traveller's keen intellect prompted some interesting questions about this "new religion" I was so enthusiastic about.

"What would you tell an up-and-coming scientist?" he asked one day.

"Depends on the scientist," I answered. "Some are as dogmatic and rigid in their pseudo-science as the "hell-and-damnation" type of Christian. The real big men in their field understand religion in its true, broad sense—the greater their work the greater their humility about the profound majesty of the universe they investigate."

Professor Milliken says: "The further I go into creation the more conscious I am of the Creator."

"Does *your* religion include scientific facts?"

"It teaches there is no quarrel between true religion and true science. The purpose of science is to discover facts and make those facts serve mankind constructively. True religion prevents men from subverting this knowledge, from a beneficent factor to a destructive one."

"Such as?" he questioned.

"Well, look what we've done with aviation—turned it into a means of warfare, with our giant bombing planes, instead of opening up communication between every nation and facilitating the well-being of people short of commodities and comforts in their own lands where no transportation is. The same thing with modern chemistry, which was given us to help industry and shorten labour hours. The development of science is one hundred years ahead of our cultural and moral development. Men are not equipped morally to be in possession of death-rays, exterminating gases and explosives. They behave like children who will eventually blow themselves to pieces together with the innocents."

"So?"

"Well, if we had a united world which is the purpose of real religion, we couldn't possibly permit ourselves to use our knowledge for such purposes. That's where real religion comes in—science gives us the quantitative side of facts: religion the qualitative."

So another member joined the midnight spiritual *tête-à-tête*!

Home again, we were piloted up the river past the statue which symbolizes to the teeming millions the hope and possibilities of the nation.

I dashed down the gang-plank brimming with enthusiasm—a hundred dreams and purposes surging within me—impatient to share the tremendous thing I had found.

Words, ideas, tumbled from my lips as I rode along in the taxi beside my husband and two friends. Then, looking through the window at the people whom we passed, I received my first shock:

"What has happened to America since I left?" I exclaimed:

"Nothing!" they answered. "Why?"

"Has there been a catastrophe of some kind?"

"No!" they laughed. This was in 1928, before the depression, of course.

"But those faces. They are terrible," I protested.

"What is terrible about them?" someone asked.

"Don't you see it? They are wistful, nervous and—"

spiritually empty. Hungry is the word. It's a spiritual and an actual physical hunger."

What I had never noticed before was now plainly manifest. New York seemed flat—lifeless. After Haifa and the Orient, this world of towering skyscrapers and roaring traffic was as spiritually dead as the steel girders of its buildings. And this death—strange that I had never perceived it before—was written on every face. Could it be that a dying civilization had already stamped its indelible mark?

I turned to my husband, with a sudden resolve formed.

"What are your plans?"

"Your plans are mine."

"How about 'Green Acre'?"

"Rather a quiet place after Europe and the Orient. Would you be content to spend the summer there?"

"Yes. Furthermore, ever since I left Haifa I have had a feeling that I should like to own a large farm and the Ole Bull House."

The latter, a large, rambling, brown-shingled building, with its many pointed gables and sweeping verandas overhanging the Piscataqua River, had once been the home of the Norwegian violinist now passed away. About its many fire-places great musicians and artists had gathered. In the music room they had taken part in impromptu concerts, which are still legendary, or sat on the veranda watching evening gather on the Piscataqua or "River of Peace." Between living-room and music room descend the steps on which Geraldine Farrar is said to have stood and sung to a celebrated group of artists. I visualized, instead of a music *salon*, a Persian room, a spiritual gathering place where the finest intellects of to-day could gather to work and plan for the future world commonwealth. One of the rooms I pictured furnished with the collection of my world tours—an Oriental fastness in a Western world.

"Why the farm and the Ole Bull House too?" was a naturally surprised question from my husband.

"Well, I've been thinking about the marvellous humanitarian services Abdu'l Bahá performed, as a result

of his foresight before the World War, saving thousands of people in Syria from starvation during the Mesopotamia campaign. Also that in 1912 when he was in "Green Acre" he warned believers of future chaos because civilization would become so complicated and intense that people would be forced back to the land from the over-strained cities. I should like now to begin to prepare for the future."

It was 1927 when my husband and I agreed to buy the farm—two years before the crash of 1929! How often since that epoch-dividing event have men like Henry Ford advocated smaller civic centres, supporting their populations with both industrial and agricultural pursuits.

I returned to "Green Acre" to receive a reception second only to that I had found in Haifa. People of all walks of life gathered at the simple inn to study the new social order, economics and comparative religion. I spent a joyous summer—attending lectures, studying, refitting "Ole Bull," and securing a farm.

Ole Bull House is located near the Green Acre Inn, facing a grove of locust trees extending to the water's edge. Here the river makes a wide turn, forming a bay as wide as a lake, in which the sun sets each evening in unforgettable splendour. Only once, on the Red Sea on my way to India, have I seen anything to equal those sunsets on the Piscataqua—when the bay is turned into a flaming cauldron, over which hangs the molten ball of the sun separated from it by a thin line of sky.

A short distance from the Green Acre Inn I spotted a 260-acre farm with its fascinating house, roofed by nine gables, overlooking a slope that ran to groves of pine and cedar and open field. Along the front a row of pines twenty-five feet high formed a screen of living green. I fell in love with it at sight and saluted the "For Sale" sign. Subsequently I learned that Nine Gables Farm was known through York County as having the "earliest" ground, the first peas coming up three weeks ahead of neighbouring farms. In the distance the foot-hills of the White Mountains rose in magnificent sweeping terraces to Mt. Salvat.

On this little mountain, so thickly wooded with the then young pines, He had predicted there would be reared a universal temple similar to that now being completed near Chicago. Around it, He said, would rise a second institution, where the new education of the future—the higher sciences, the new economics—would be taught. Looking at this simple, unpretentious hill to-day, it seems incredible; yet—wasn't Haifa, the newly built harbour, just as unpromising when He predicted that ships from all over the world would anchor there? Already it has become the International Summer School where courses are held for study of the New World Order.

At the close of the Summer School I began the thrilling job of remodelling this colonial farmhouse, built a Shenandoah and went in for model poultry farming.

Convinced that goat's milk contained excellent properties for health, especially for youth, I started out in search of these dainty creatures.

Now that I am on the subject, I might add in defence of the much maligned female that it was the Billy who ruined her reputation.

Eventually I learned that when Billy is kept a certain distance away at milking times, there is not the slightest odour in the building or strong flavour to the milk.

CHAPTER XVI

OFF AGAIN

INTERNATIONAL correspondence, poultry incubating at the farm and flying to New York twice a week to attend extension courses is no mean undertaking for one winter.

By summer Nine Gables Farm had been finished and we were able to enjoy the unusual combination of country life plus intellectual and spiritual recreation. Indeed, "Ole Bull," "Nine Gables" and even its studio overflowed the entire season.

September saw me on the *Berengaria*, sailing for Geneva, Switzerland, to attend the Council of the League of Nations, intending from there to visit Persia via Russia.

But I was determined not to leave America again before viewing the first Bahá'í House of Worship to be erected in the New World.

Full of soaring dreams, I flew to Chicago and motored out to Wilmette to see this unique edifice. As I stood before the colossal steel framework, the undertaking of literally a handful of American Bahá'is, of whom not more than 5 per cent have any pretence to wealth, I wondered at their courage and faith in the eventual completion of this gigantic symbol of unity.

Later, I learned from one who had shared in its pioneer developments the almost unbelievable story of how two women in 1912 had actually secured the large site overlooking Lake Michigan, upon which the edifice is being built, by paying twenty dollars for the option. The sale price was seventeen thousand dollars! The architect, Mr. Louis Bourgeois, who was then engaged as a draftsman by a large firm, lacked sufficient money to pay for one small panel of the model he wished to produce and which was to be displayed in New York at an architec-

tural exhibition. Mr. Bourgeois took a blue-print of the panel to a firm to have it cast in plaster. So impressed was the head of the firm with its beauty of design that he offered to cast it without pay so that he might see how it looked in concrete form.

Then to raise five dollars to pay for the casting of the second panel, Mr. Bourgeois' wife cut every cluster of climbing roses from their garden and Mr. Bourgeois sold them.

When this model—exquisitely, uniquely, beautiful—was finished, it was placed in the Architectural League Exhibition, where it captured the gold medal. It was acclaimed as the first new development in architecture since the thirteenth century. The building symbolizes the all-inclusiveness of the Bahá'í Faith by combining in its nine sides most of the architectural designs and *motifs* of the world, the Gothic, Chinese, Moorish, etc. Yet it is perfectly unified and harmonious and has a distinct individuality.

In a secluded spot beneath the lofty dome I knelt on a Persian rug before the foundation stone. A little widow, now advanced in years, but with the energy and enthusiasm of youth, later told me the story of how she had obtained and put it in place. Returning from work one evening, she was passing a pile of stones on a vacant lot when she seemed to see a great edifice rising out of them. Intuitively she knew that one of these was to become the foundation stone of the proposed House of Worship.

She obtained the contractor's permission, selected a stone and, assisted by a friend, wrapped it in a rug, tied it with a clothes-line and dragged it home. Four-thirty the next morning found her, assisted by two friends, struggling aboard a street car with her heavy burden. When they alighted from the car, one of her friends carried the stone half a block on his back. She had brought along an improvised wagon made from a soap-box and two baby-carriage wheels.

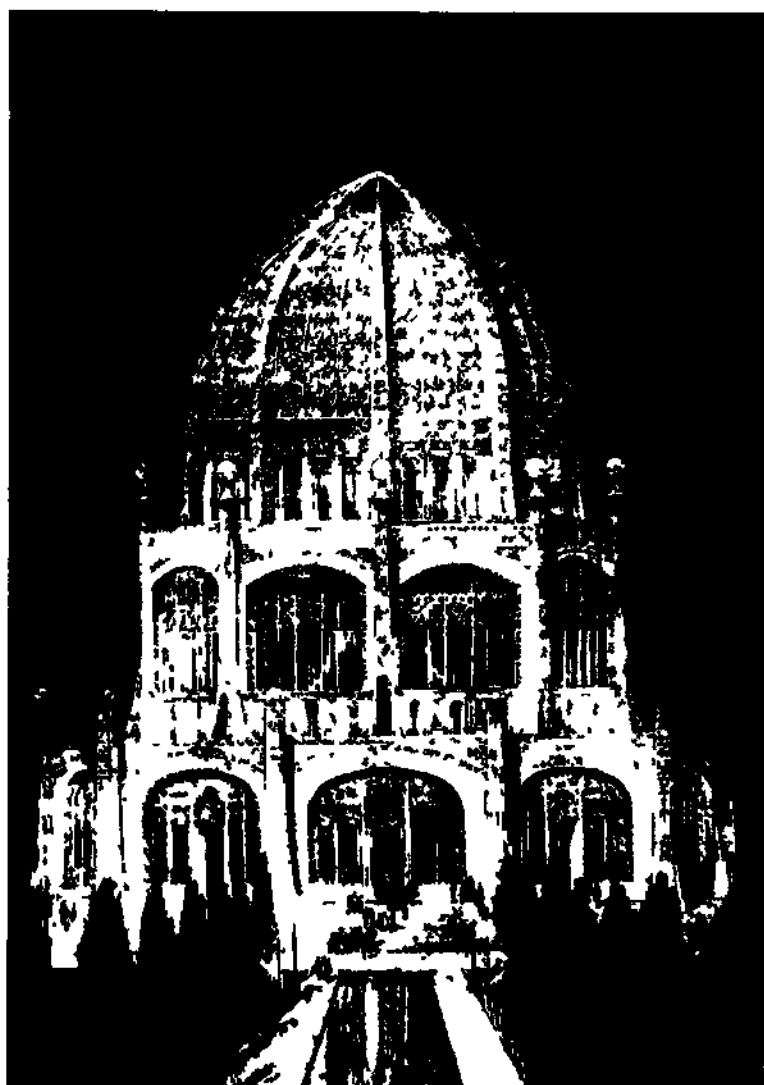
On the first attempt to lower it to the wagon the stone cut her arm and knocked the little tongue off the wagon. Two milkmen, harnessing their horses a block away, volunteered to repair it. Setting out anew, the three

devotees were aided by a passing newsboy. When they finally arrived at the site, they were debating how to place the stone in the position between two trees which she had selected for it, when the wheels of the wagon bent, the soap-box collapsed and the stone rolled to the exact spot which had been chosen. "Little boy," said the woman to the newsboy, "when you grow up to be a big man you will see a magnificent building rising from this stone."

In 1912, when Abdu'l Bahá dedicated the site of the House of Worship, he stood behind the very stone that this inspired woman's faith had brought there, as he addressed the hushed assemblage. He broke the ground with a golden trowel and—even as the woman had prophesied to the newsboy—to-day a magnificent edifice is nearing completion—devoted to the Most Great Peace and New World Commonwealth.

Six days later I was in Paris and was advised to apply for my *visé* to Russia at the London Soviet Consulate. The Russian Minister would not make a promise, he advised me to have passport photographs taken, return with them and fill out an application form. This I did and the friendly minister despatched it special delivery to the foreign office at Moscow, with the added information that I was travelling hurriedly to Persia and would be satisfied with a transit *visé*. I was advised to call at the Soviet Consulate when I reached Warsaw, Poland.

I was informed that it might take two or three weeks to obtain a *visé* so I decided to take a jaunt into Turkey first.



BAHÁ'Í HOUSE OF WORSHIP SYMBOL OF UNITY NO SERMONS
WILMETTE ILLINOIS NEAR CHICAGO ON LAKE MICHIGAN

CHAPTER XVII

HAREM TO FREEDOM

THE progress of the Turkish women is remarkable. The veil has become a curiosity. Most of the women have adopted the European type of dress, which becomes them most admirably. They have entered the professions and hold no mean positions as lawyers, doctors and teachers. The schools and colleges of Turkey, adopting Western methods, have become palaces of education offering unlimited opportunity to the "New Turk." I found a great Youth Movement being carried on in a most energetic and sane manner, its purpose—to put the Youth of the world in touch with each other to their mutual advantage. They had already acquired some twenty thousand names of foreign youths with whom they corresponded. Their leaders readily perceived the advantage of the Bahá'í programme on Progressive Education, and in appreciation of constructive advice I was able to give them, they presented me upon my departure with a tan blazer bearing upon the breast pocket the yellow and red Turkish insignia of the Youth Movement.

An article which I remember only in part and which appeared in a French newspaper printed in Constantinople, more than amused me. As near as I can recall the headline ran: "Modern missionary enunciating fourteen points of President Woodrow Wilson, is at the Pera Palace Hotel." A lengthy interview followed setting forth the plan of the New World Order and stating that I was now on my way to Russia and Persia to 'convert them.' It ended: "This is the first missionary to Turkey who has beautiful eyes and legs!"

Some overzealous patriots, anxious to prepare the way for me, forwarded copies of this article to the

Russian and Persian Governments. The result was almost to make me a prisoner on the Caspian Sea a month later. This article was, of course, untrue. I had given my word to Prince Arfa Dowleh, Persia's representative to the League of Nations, that I was going to Persia chiefly in the interest of women as a representative of the International Council of Women. I had shown him my credentials and had been encouraged to see what I could accomplish with the women of his country. In return he had presented me with a splendid introduction to government officials and military commanders throughout Persia.

Hopeful that my transit *visé* to Russia would now be ready, I boarded the International Express for Warsaw. The first thing I did when I arrived there was to call on President Pilsudski, who received me most cordially. I drank for the first time the wonderful Polish coffee—hot, served in tall glasses, with an equal amount of whipped cream piled on top. When he learned what I had become so deeply interested in—the Bahá'í Programme—President Pilsudski inquired where literature could be obtained.

Then I thought of Lydia Zamenhof, daughter of the late Dr. Zamenhof, who over half a century ago conceived the idea of the Esperanto language. She gave me an interesting account of her father's childhood and how the idea of an international language had come to him at the age of nine, inspired by the polyglot tongues of his little playmates on the streets. She realized that her father had caught the vision of the New World Order without ever having heard that an international auxiliary language was included in the plan.

This lovely, fair-haired Polish girl has also caught the vision and is now translating the Bahá'í teachings into both Polish and Esperanto.

My *visé* was awaiting me at the Soviet Consulate and I had just completed preparations to leave for Moscow when I discovered at the railroad station that the Moscow train ran only once a week, on Saturday night—this was Thursday—and all reservations had been booked solid for the next four weeks. Wondering what I should do

next, I sank down on a bench and watched the line at the ticket wicket.

"Perhaps someone will come along who would like to change their ticket for a later date," I ventured aloud.

A dark-skinned youth, standing at the wicket with a roll of bills in his hand, promptly said: "You may have mine!"

The clerk protested. "That is impossible! The ticket you reserved is in a gentleman's compartment. I cannot sell this ticket to madam!"

"I will go later!" exclaimed the young man, aligning himself on my side. The clerk remained obdurate and the young man finally settled the matter by the simplest expedient of buying the ticket he had reserved and handing it to me.

CHAPTER XVIII

SOVIETS

AS I entered the train for Moscow two evenings later, to my consternation I found a huge, sticky-looking police dog serenely occupying the lower berth. It was evidently the property of the occupant of the upper berth, a fellow for whom, although as yet unseen, I at once felt a violent aversion. I coaxed the dog to the floor and was energetically pushing it into the hall when a furious red-faced individual appeared in the doorway, pushed the dog back in again and started to pull me out, accompanying his unfriendly actions with a stream of full-throated invective. Quite as lustily I shouted back my objections to sleeping in the same bed with his hound, at the same time locking the door in his face to prevent myself from being forcibly ejected.

In the meantime my outcries had brought the conductor running. Cautiously I opened the door and in effective pantomime demanded his protection, supplementing this with so fast and furious a verbal barrage concerning the dog that the conductor suddenly grabbed the man, whose face was turning purple with rage, by the shoulders and literally threw him off the train, dog and all. As the train started to move out of the station I had the guilty feeling that the conductor probably misinterpreted my gestures and had assumed that I had been "insulted."

When the conductor realized that he had an extra berth on his hands, he was worried, until he discovered that the train had one more man than he had berths. He assigned my berth to the extra passenger—and arranged for me to share a compartment with a Russian woman, the wife of a British Consul. Her husband had been detained in England on business.

We arrived at the Russian frontier the following afternoon. All luggage had been removed from the train and we were lined up at the customs for inspection. One look at what was happening to my fellow-passengers in line before me convinced me that I had a violent headache. Even the luggage of the British Consul's wife was being tossed about the floor with sadistic pleasure by the customs officer, though it evidently consisted of nothing but blankets and linen.

The furious Consul's wife brandished her diplomatic *visé* in their faces, explaining that her luggage must be passed without inspection—to all of which they paid not the slightest attention. Finally, they pounced upon a little paper package and thrust it in front of her face with a vicious: "What is this?" and with all the air of having made an incriminating discovery.

"Sell it and find out!" shouted the exasperated lady. It turned out to be two pounds of mocha and java coffee, which I later discovered to be a rarity in the land of the Soviets.

At the end of the customs building, a fine-looking fair-haired officer in brilliant green uniform stood surveying the scene with a smile of amusement that seemed not wholly lacking in sympathy. It was worth taking a chance. Rushing up to him, I said:

"I left Warsaw in such a hurry that I forgot to change my zlotis for roubles. Would you assist me?"

He was more than delighted, escorted me to the money exchange office and put up a gallant fight to obtain for me a better rate of exchange, accusing the clerk of short-changing me.

Was there anything more that he could do for Madam! There was. I pointed to my luggage and then to the line of fuming passengers, and said: "Look! Must I endure that? Could you do it for me if I gave you the keys? And may I have one of your Russian cigarettes?"

"Most certainly, Madam."

I pointed out my luggage—steamer trunk, four suitcases, one of them filled with Bahá'í literature and the real cause of my uneasiness, a hat-box and portable typewriter and a tiny little Peter Pan gramophone for my

daily dozen which was then the latest Elizabeth Arden innovation.

"All this," he exclaimed.

"Yes, I am out for all seasons of the year. Spring, summer, autumn and winter." I took my key and started to open the trunk when he gently pushed my hand aside and said: "It looks harmless. It would be much more enjoyable for you to have tea than to stand here in line."

He ordered my luggage returned to the train and escorted me back to my compartment, where we were finishing the last of the tea and cakes when the Consul's wife returned.

"Imagine," she exploded. "And I with a diplomatic passport! They're still going through the personal notebook of a Japanese official." It took an hour to complete the perusal of that notebook, which proved a perfectly innocuous document, but the train was held up without the slightest show of impatience on the part of the Russian passengers.

Two days in Moscow in winter was scarcely enough to penetrate the veil of its outward appearance of ferment, of hope and of poverty. I toured the Kremlin and its fantastic palaces, churches and shrines—Red Square; bizarre, many-coloured St. Basil's, and a tomb of Lenin, where the great Bolshevik leader's embalmed remains was viewed by an unending procession. "Officially guided," I viewed a modern school, a hospital, a tenement and other showplaces of Soviet Russia's capital.

On my second day I learned of a great mass meeting to be held in the auditorium and, accompanied by several newly made acquaintances, managed to make my way to the front row of the immense room, which had been hung with flags and bunting like the inside of an elaborate circus arena.

Thousands of workers sat and stood in bedraggled and oily looking sheepskin coats and caps, peasants with legs wrapped in rags, awaiting the principal speaker, a former canon of the Greek Orthodox Church. The audience smelled like at least ten million of the great unwashed.

The ex-canon proved to be a tall, raw-boned man with

a strong-looking Cossack face. He was dressed in Russian fashion with grey blouse and high boots, the mode of the hour. His speech, I had been told, was to be a violent denunciation of religion, with "proofs" of the non-existence of God, and that Jesus Christ was a myth. He announced that his address would be followed by a general discussion, fifteen minutes being allowed to each speaker. I rose and asked if I also might speak.

"I am sorry, but it will be impossible," said the chairman. "We can permit only the Russian language to be spoken."

I remained standing and smilingly said: "The speaker is afraid of what I might say. I am satisfied to speak only seven minutes, the other seven minutes to be used by an interpreter."

At that, both chairman and speaker smiled and the former said: "Madam, how could I refuse a charming lady!"

My companions hastily translated in both ears at the same time the gist of the main address and of the discussions that followed. After listening for almost two hours I became exasperated, rose to my feet and asked when my turn was to come.

"At once!" exclaimed the chairman with an extremely polite gesture and I climbed to the platform in an attempt to uphold God and Christ before a gathering of Communists.

They listened with respectful attention while I gave utterance to words that seemed to spring spontaneously from my lips, although they have now become a hazy recollection. Briefly my argument, as I remember it, ran:

"One of our great philosophers has said that whenever he sees a watch, he wonders about the watchmaker. Cold logic tells us that there can never be an effect without a cause, and any intelligent human being ought therefore to realize that behind the mechanism of the world which we see, with its definite laws of mechanics, physics and chemistry—far more complicated than the mechanism of any watch—there must be a Maker and an Intelligence which enables it to operate.

"Professor Milliken, the American scientist, adds:

'The further I go into creation the more conscious I am of the Creator.'

"An intelligent person has only to trace history to learn that every civilization that this earth has ever seen has been founded on the inspiration of some Superman—a being that towered above his fellows in intellect, spirit and will—in other words a Prophet. To say that a whole civilization—that any civilization could be founded on a myth, indicates a complete ignorance and misunderstanding of the facts of history.

"You say that you loathe the institution of Christianity and that as a former canon you ought to know what you are talking about, when you say that the Church is full of corruption beyond the imagination of the average layman. I admit that *much* of what you say is true. Still, to maintain that the Church has become corrupted and that the spiritual foundation of our civilization—as of every previous civilization—has been destroyed, does not mean that the founders of these civilizations are mythical. Neither does it confer upon you the right to denounce the pure and lofty teachings which Jesus Christ and the other prophets brought to the world and which we humans have permitted to fall into decay.

"Jesus, Muhammad and Moses, and the other prophets lived. They brought truth to this world and founded civilizations. But the creeds have grown outmoded, and have become encrusted with superstitious tradition and dogma. Humanity is desperately in need of true religion—and that rare jewel is already well established in forty countries. You have kept your eyes too close to the ground during the past few years."

I was permitted to finish my talk, which took considerably more than fifteen minutes, and additional time was graciously granted for interpretation.

I had heard so many tales of the violent suppression of religious expression that I had become concerned as to the audience's reaction. When my interpreter had finished, however, the chairman walked over to me and shook me firmly by the hand, and the entire mob rose *en masse* to applaud vigorously.

I left Moscow on the once-a-week International

Wagon-Lit for Ashkabad (since re-named Poltoratsky). On the same train, travelling third class, was a little Russian teacher, whom I had met in Moscow, also *en route* to Ashkabad to teach at the Bahá'í School, maintained in connection with the first Bahá'í House of Worship. At the dinner hour I walked back to the third class car, found my little friend and invited her to accompany me to the dining-car. She had already cooked and eaten her dinner, but offered to accompany me. We walked through twelve cars, hopping from one narrow unguarded steel platform to the next as the train jerked along, before reaching the dining-car.

It was grimy and dilapidated, with long oilcloth covered tables, at which several grey-shirted Russians were enjoying their *borsch*. We selected a table at the rear of the car farthest away from the kitchen and had just ordered *borsch*, *bauf à la Stroganoff* and black bread when the door opened and in flocked at least two dozen unkempt, unshaven males in dark grey shirts. They stared at me in an unfriendly manner, then, hearing me speak English, one of them leaned over and grumbled to my companion :

"People who cannot talk Russian should not travel in Russia !"

I then summoned the waiter and ordered vodka. The appearance of the vodka, however, seemed to impress them in my favour, for the criticism ceased and instead we exchanged opinions, through the medium of my companion, on the success of the communistic movement in America.

One man, after a long conversation with the rest of his comrades, inquired :

"What does America think of Communism."

I laughed and replied : "Not much."

Good-naturedly they informed me that I was entirely wrong and that "all of America and Europe had gone communistic."

Next I was asked :

"What is your personal opinion of Communism ?"

Again I answered : "Not much. But what do *you* think about it ?"

By way of reply there followed a long harangue regarding equality, which, during the next hour, between bites of cold "Strogonoff," I attempted to convince them did not exist.

"Equality is a chimera," I informed them. "It is ridiculous to image that all people can be levelled to the same station by officially ignoring their differences in capacity. There will always be rulers and ruled—although under more ideal conditions in the future than existed in the past. Most certainly there are rulers and ruled in Russia to-day !

"Although Soviet Russia has rid itself of the intelligentsia—the brains of the country—the present regime is importing at double wages what it calls 'specialists,' after having presumably levelled all wages to approximately fifty dollars a month for labourers as well as professional men. In other words you are just beginning to realize that you cannot run a country without a technical and professional class and that the proletariat alone is not sufficient. Engineers, doctors, lawyers, mechanics, electricians and men of executive ability are all needed in society."

The car was in an uproar. For a time so excited were they that I hesitated to return to my compartment for fear they might throw me off the train from the gaping spaces between the cars. It developed that the excitement was merely due to a controversy among themselves in interpreting what I had said.

When I finally mustered up enough courage to leave the car, I was terrified to see at least twenty of the Bolsheviks with whom I had been arguing with such animation jump to their feet. My heart quivered as they walked ahead and cleared a passage, formed a line on either side of the openings between the cars and accompanied me all the way back to the *wagon-lit*.

As a subtle thrust, I carefully pointed out that even in this communistically operated train, there were three classes of accommodations—"international," first class; "soft seats," second class; and "hard seats," third class. They continued to show extreme friendliness and courtesy to this member of the much-despised capitalistic

class and, although I disagreed absolutely with the principles which they were forced to accept from their leaders, my opinion of these Communists, as leaves of the "same human tree"—as my "kin"—rose greatly.

Bahá'is at Moscow had telegraphed to Tashkent that I should make a brief stop-over there, so when the train came to a halt, I found a delegation awaiting me with heaps of roses. Delighted with these men and their thoughtfulness, I almost succumbed to their earnest pleading that I spend at least twenty-four hours at Tashkent. They had brought with them to the station several Communists who were becoming deeply interested in their newly found Faith. The *wagon-lit* "International"—ran but once a week. The other trains had accommodations comparable to fourth class, mostly "hard seats," overcrowded with proletariat, many of them rather rabid in their opposition to "Capitalist." Not wishing to have my clothes torn off, I decided to remain on the "International" and ride straight through.

CHAPTER XIX

ASHKABAD

STRANGELY enough Russia was the first country to witness the erection of a Bahá'í House of Worship and its corresponding institutions as well as being the scene to-day of the most stupendous political experiment in history. During the reign of Tsar Alexander II the Bahá'í Movement was encouraged and flourished throughout Russia. It was the Russian Government, in fact, which saved Bahá'u'lláh and his followers from being executed by infuriated Persian officials following the attempted assassination of Shah Nasir-u-Din at Tihrán in 1852, which had occurred in the following way :

After two years of general persecution following the brutal martyrdom of the forerunner, the Báb, a youthful, grief-crazed devotee, was incited to avenge his leader's and fellow-believers' deaths. The youth lay in ambush and fired at the Shah as the latter passed with his retinue. The gun was of small calibre and the wound was slight, but the Shah tumbled off his frightened horse. Immediately one of the Shah's guards fell upon the young assassin with his sabre and hacked him to pieces. Bahá'u'lláh and other followers of the Báb were seized and thrown into prison after a series of the most horrible public massacres. Records from such reliable sources as Lord Curzon, in his book *Persia and the Persian Question*, Edward Granville Browne of Cambridge, and their contemporaries substantiate the accounts of these outrages.

Knowing of the interest of Tsar Alexander II in the Báb, the Russian Consul at Tihrán took an artist to the scene of the Báb's martyrdom to sketch the riddled body as it lay in the ditch where it had been ruthlessly thrown.

The Consul, who was married to a great Persian lady, a friend of Bahá'u'lláh, took it upon himself to rescue Bahá'u'lláh from the pestilential dungeon, in which he was chained to the floor with bands of iron around his neck and wrists which left their deep scars till the last day of his life.

The Consul notified the Persian Government that this personage was unjustly imprisoned and that unless he were immediately released the city streets would run blood, as the great nation of Russia stood behind him. The Persian Government acted at once, took Bahá'u'lláh from the dungeon and banished him, with his family, to Baghdád.

The Tsar sent an escort of fifty officers to accompany him safely from Tihrán to the boundary of Iraq.

When a delegation of Bahá'is from Ashkabad had visited the great Bolshevik leader and explained their philosophy, he had exclaimed: "There is nothing antagonistic to our regime in this Teaching."

"Our progress is spiritual, we believe in construction, not destruction," continued one of the Bahá'is. "We believe in building the weakest of humanity to the level of our highest."

Through the window of my railroad compartment I had caught my first glimpse of the coloured tile dome that gleams over the world's first Bahá'i House of Worship. Blue, yellow, orange and white—but especially blue—it formed a brilliant sphere of colour against the cloudless sky—like some ethereal idea made visible. A few minutes later we reached the lofty structure—its coloured tile walls rising like some delicate porcelain palace from the midst of a beautiful park. Hordes of citizens were sauntering along its flower-bordered paths. At the four corners of the park stood the spacious lecture hall, the schools and the other accessory buildings of this miniature Bahá'i Commonwealth. Guarding the park ran a high iron fence, broken by a single entrance with two immense iron gates.

Approximately five thousand of the citizens of Ashkabad are Bahá'is. Nowhere have I witnessed a similar community spirit, a perfect example of solidarity—in this

case manifest in a striking realization of their educational and cultural progress. The department of education is equal to the most advanced in the United States in the emphasis on social studies. As I was guided into each classroom in turn, the instructor called on me to make a speech to which, in each case, one of the children responded with a courteous address of welcome, followed by a poem. I was thrilled by the sense of social responsibility so early inculcated in these citizens of to-morrow.

That night in the huge assembly hall I addressed a crowd of citizens so large that every seat had been taken long before I appeared. Floor and window-sills were covered with men, women and children. An open forum followed and, as might be expected in a Soviet community, discussion centred on God and evolution. Finally, after listening to a particularly heated, although good-natured, attack upon the Deity as "a conception that no scientist holds to-day," I flashed back this illuminating quotation from probably the most famous living man of science, Albert Einstein :

"Man functions on many planes, but God functions on many more."

Just as I was at a most uncomfortable stage of having entangled my fingers in sugared frosting, I overheard a heated discussion near me, and asked my interpreter what was the cause of the excitement. "That square-jawed man from the Caucasus is seriously objecting to anything new in the way of religious interpretation. He says his grandfather was a very good man, and that he swears that he will never change from the tradition of his ancestral teaching. He says, also, that the world has gone to hell because it would not remain exactly as it was for thousands of years. He thinks that the teaching of progress and evolution is the teaching of the devil." I began to laugh with some discretion, as the Russians are very sensitive, and they must not think that my laughter was in the spirit of criticism. They are always deeply affected by a story to illustrate a point of issue, so I decided to tell them my charming little story of the drying lake.

There was a Lake in a Valley. The Sun drew up its

moisture, and used the moisture to water the trees, the flowers and the grass for many miles around it. The Lake, however, was rapidly drying.

A shoal of little fishes lived in this Lake, dashing joyfully here and there among the weeds. Often as they rushed about a bigger fish chased them and caught a couple of them for breakfast. But they had a short memory for unpleasant things.

Once it happened that one little fish, too anxious to get away from the big one, had jumped clear out of the water and found herself upon the shore. What an experience! The blue sky, the bright sun, beautiful flowers and trees. But—no water! The little fish gasped for breath and, plunging wildly, slipped back into the Lake. She was curious, however, and repeated her adventure several times. She found it was easier to breathe as her gills became accustomed to thin air. She liked the sun and the sky and the grass and gradually the old Lake seemed to be muddy and dark, the weeds colourless and dirty.

One fine day, lying upon the shore, the little fish had made a terrible discovery. The Lake was actually drying up! The little fish was a conscientious soul, so she rushed back to her brothers and sisters and made a fine appeal. "You must all learn to breathe the air and live ashore, because the Lake is drying up and you simply MUST think of your future life." But the other little fishes thought differently. "What! Leave the nice, fat mud and foul water, full of food, to suffer the inconvenience of adapting ourselves to that thin air? Not for your life! Our ancestors lived in this Lake for generations and here we are all going to stay! If there are some crazy people who want something new, let them get out and do as they please." The excitement ran high and it was fortunate the fishes did not have any hands as otherwise they would have surely stoned their little sister.

But the day came when only a little pool of mud had remained of the Lake. In it a few fishes were gasping for water.

But our little fish lay on the shore—a beautiful green

lizard—and played among the rocks and flowers, in the rays of the sun which sparkled and danced on its emerald back.

Long after the forum had formally terminated, the argument went on, continuing even while a reception committee was attempting to stuff me with Russian tea and appetizing wedges of cake which had been baked and decorated for the occasion with my initials boldly clinging to its sugared elegance.

The baths attached to the city institution were models. They were managed by Bahá'is, as many of the public institutions were. Public buildings, the streets and the private homes, into which I was enthusiastically welcomed, were cleaner, more orderly, and far more artistic than any I had seen since I had entered the Soviet Republic.

For three days I visited this delightful city, making my headquarters at the home of a well-to-do merchant, who had furnished his spacious dining-room for my use. From six o'clock in the morning until long past midnight I was called upon by a stream of devoted Bahá'is, who gathered by the hundreds in the drawing-room. A stream of Communists, both men and women, also poured in and out of the three entrances the entire evening.

Whenever I would leave the house for a few minutes to catch a breath of fresh air on the veranda, scores of new faces would greet me from the garden below.

I finally bade farewell to Ashkabad and entrained for the boat crossing the Caspian Sea. With a feeling of mingled loss and regret, I started for Baku, laden with roses of every variety and hue.

CHAPTER XX

THE GATE

IF I had made a conscientious search, I doubt whether I could have selected a more prosaic point to enter the land of my dreams than Joulfa—shabby frontier which straddles the Aras River—the north half lying in Russia, the southern half in the Persian province of Azerbaijan. Yet such is the power of suggestion wrought by an intensive perusal of Persian poetry and belles lettres dealing with Iranian journeys, that with quickened pulse I followed the trio of husky, hawk-nosed Armenian porters as they bore my luggage across the bridge.

When my passport and bags were about to be inspected I started my miniature Peter Pan gramophone with the last word in jazz, which put the customs' inspector in so amiable a mood that he passed my luggage unopened. It was lucky for me, for my brief case was filled with all sorts of literature, notes and snapshots which would certainly have been confiscated.

Vainly I cast my eyes in all directions for some indication that I had at last set foot in the magic land of roses. The sun was already beginning to sink beyond the distant Caucasian mountain peaks, but not quickly enough to conceal from me the disillusioning fact that Joulfa was as poetic a spot as Sinclair Lewis' *Main Street* town of Zenith—its chief boast its lone telegraph station.

The telegraph operator proved to be a Bahá'í who with touching hospitality offered me humble accommodation for the night, for the passenger train that runs between Joulfa and my destination—Tabriz—was not due for another fifteen hours. I was impatient, however, to be off, and, after considering the feasibility of travelling by freight train, and making the necessary arrangements with the brake-man and conductor, I climbed into a box

car, tucked my portable typewriter under my head, wrapped myself in a rug, and settled myself for sleep. At about three o'clock in the morning I was startled by the squeaking protest of the rollers on the door of my improvised boudoir and the sound of voices addressing me in excellent English. The flickering lantern light shone on four Bahá'is from Tabriz. The agent at Joulfa had telegraphed them of my venture and they had arrived by automobile to escort me in a more befitting manner.

We arrived at last at a high wall in the centre of the city, the portal of which with its ponderous iron knocker seemed strong enough to guard a prison. It was of heavy wood, trimmed inside and out with iron and fastened with massive bolts and lock. It was not only the sole means of passing within the high walls, but also a monument to the substantial mode in which the residents of Tabriz built more than two centuries ago. The walls of the residences were frescoed from floor to ceiling with little niches placed here and there to hold vases, miniatures and other *objets d'art*.

I was lavishly entertained. Men, women and children from every quarter of the province came to see me. A descendant of one of the martyrs of Tabriz had ridden a donkey part way and, when the animal gave out, had finished the journey of seventy-five miles on foot explicitly for that purpose. He was so overcome with emotion that he fell in a dead faint on the floor at my feet. Could anyone not be deeply affected by such impersonal devotion. How could one suppress tears.

During my stay a continuous feast was held and the house and garden were thronged with believers passing in and out.

Tabriz, the second largest city of Iran, despite its population of two hundred and ten thousand, is a city whose chief glories lie in the past. Once, when it had been the great trade emporium for merchants exchanging the wares of Persia, India, Turkey and Russia, its population had numbered five hundred and fifty thousand. According to legend, the city was founded by the wife of Harun-al-Rashid in A.D. 79. Its actual history is even more venerable, but the wickedness of nature and man

conspired to cast Tabriz from her proud seat. A series of devastating earthquakes, the most notable of which occurred in 858, 1041, 1721 and 1781, decimated its population. Eighty thousand perished in the quake of 1721 alone. In turn the city fell under the sway of Arabs, Seljuks, Mongols, Turkomans, and finally Persians (not counting the interludes of Turkish and Russian possession during the World War). The development of shipping on the Caspian Sea finally ended the primacy of Tabriz as a centre for carpets, rugs, shawls, silks, cottons, raisins and almonds—although their trade is still of considerable importance.

Tabriz boasted a hundred public baths, well-equipped caravanserais and more than three hundred mosques, of which the Blue Mosque, or Majid-i-Kebud, now in ruins, was the most celebrated.

For Bahá'is the city is remembered with anguish as the scene of the martyrdom of the Báb,¹ the inspired forerunner of Bahá'u'lláh.

The narrow streets, with the walled-in houses, the bustling bazaars and the tile-ornamented mosques glittering in the bright sun, stirred my love of the romantic, but my chief interest was for the landmark made sacred by the martyrdom of the Báb on July 9th, 1851.

Where once the ancient barracks had stood, I found a crumbling wall in a beautiful part with a garden of shrubbery and fragrant flowers enclosed by a modern wall. Closer inspection disclosed that the crumbling wall, more than six hundred years old, was the very one on which the Báb had been suspended when a volley of bullets ended his life. By some unaccountable sequence of events the government, which had sought to extinguish the Bahá'í Faith, had actually preserved this memorable spot for posterity.

As I stood before this wall I wondered at the courage of the Báb. In imagination the tragedy of which I had so often read and heard was re-enacted. I saw the Báb, then only thirty years of age, scorn to win freedom

¹ Báb transliterated means Gate, Door or Herald; spiritually the gate to a message such as Moses, Buddha, Jesus or Muhammad brought.

at the cost of renouncing his mission, and march under guard with his youthful follower, Aga Muhammad Ali, to his execution.

Yards and roofs of surrounding buildings were black with spectators. Ropes were quickly fastened under their arm-pits in such fashion that, as they hung suspended, the head of the youth rested against the breast of his beloved Master as if to protect it.

A squad of Armenian soldiers formed a line facing the suspended figures. Their officer gave the command to load . . . and . . . "Fire!"

The rifles cracked as one and a cloud of black smoke rolled from their muzzles with such intensity as to blot out the scene momentarily. When the smoke faded away the astounded multitude saw the Báb's companion standing calm and unhurt at the foot of the wall, while the Báb had disappeared.

The bullets had pierced only the ropes, dropping the Báb and Muhammad Ali to the ground. Instead of attempting to flee, the Báb had returned quietly to his cell to finish a conversation with Siyyid Husayn, which the guards had rudely interrupted some time before, and which the Báb had told them "no human power would prevent him from finishing."

Regarding this occurrence as a miracle, the Armenian soldiers refused to fire a second time. Another squad was lined up, the Báb and the youth again strung up, and a murderous volley sent into their bodies.

When I called upon the Governor, I inquired why this portion of thin, crumbling wall of the citadel had been preserved in a new public garden.

"There was no special reason, which I know," he replied.

"Then," I said, "you have preserved what millions believe to be one of the most precious places in Persia. In the future, when the Báb's mission becomes universally known, it will be of interest to travellers from every corner of the globe."

The friendly manager at the Imperial Bank of Persia, situated in the bazaar, cashed my letter of credit, but was unable to suggest any means of reaching Tihrán.

Formerly travellers had journeyed by horse and carriage over the steep mountain paths of the Elburz, south of Tabriz, but now the roads had been torn up and completely obliterated in places. I combed the city from end to end, but there was not a taxi or motor car to be hired for love or money. Finally I bought a rickety Ford for four hundred tomans (four hundred dollars) and engaged an Armenian driver.

The next question was how to get petrol, the supply of which seemed to be entirely in the hands of a single Russian merchant. My negotiations for car and driver had consumed the better part of an evening and, eager to be off, I routed out the petrol merchant late at night. He good-naturedly aroused his servant, had the tank filled and tied an additional five poods on to the running board.

At four-thirty in the morning I took my last look at the Blue Mosque in the haze that precedes a Persian dawn and we wheezed out of the south gate of Tabriz. I shared the back seat with my trunk, which kept bouncing on to my knees throughout the long but exciting journey.

Up precipitous trails that wound round the gaunt mountain, on the edge of precipices, down into valleys studded with sleeping villages, we picked our way. Soon after we had left the plain of Tabriz we discovered that quite a stretch of the road to Tihván was being rebuilt on the foundation of the old Russian carriage road.

Shortly after sunrise had tinged the eastern hills with a delicate rose hue and turned the black and silver sky to saffron and pale blue, we came upon a crew of men, piling blocks of stone in our path. Under the guidance of the crew-boss, who, with impressive Oriental courtesy, placed them at our disposal, the men, with good-natured shouts, pushed us to the peak of what would otherwise have been an impassable path.

By means of this auxiliary power, supplied sometimes by workmen and sometimes by shepherds tending flocks in fields nearby, I was bounced between seat and roof and thwacked by my trunk most of the way to

Zanjan. Only one of all the construction bosses we encountered proved remiss in hospitality. He refused to permit his crew to abandon their labours to push us over a crest. Whereupon I snatched out of his hand the whip he had been flourishing for the benefit of lazy workers, swished him across the legs, and violently gesticulated to his startled men to such purpose that our ancient vehicle was once more able to make the grade, thanks to their assistance.

I subsisted on hard-boiled eggs and chicken cooked in saffron oil with unleavened bread, and often sat in the mud huts along the highway while a hut-wife rolled out ground wheat, mixed it with water on a stone slab, and baked it on stones in a clay oven.

When not enveloped from head to toe in the chudder, it is possible to get some idea of what a Persian woman really looks like and what she wears. Usually her frock is of modern design, but the peasants often wear a one-piece of cotton cut straight, like an old-fashioned nightgown or like the frocks in which Christian missionaries love to dress the Borneo and other South Sea Isle natives after they have won the poor little creatures over. The modified ballet costume has long since disappeared, with the tight pantellets which looked more like the old-fashioned full length under-drawers of our grandmothers.

It is said that Naser-ed-din Shah was so impressed with a ballet performance at the Paris opera that he ordered his Vizier to purchase the entire front row of the chorus and transport it to his harem, which was already well stocked with several score of picked beauties. Unable to carry through his negotiations, the Shah decided that the next best thing would be to deck the ladies of his harem in ballet costumes. The style spread rapidly through Persia, but has long since been discarded.

An amusing story is still told in Tihrán of how Nadim, the witty court jester, having incurred the displeasure of Shah-Nasir-U-Din, was ordered to leave Tihrán at once.

"But where can I go?" asked Nadim.

"Go to Tabriz!" cried the Shah excitedly.

"But your uncle is Viceroy there and if he knew you had banished me from Tihrán he would banish me from Tabriz!"

"Well then, go to Shiraz!" shouted the Shah.

"But I wouldn't be allowed to remain there either. Your brother-in-law is governor there."

"Well, go to hell then!"

"But, your father is there!"

This so amused the Shah that he straightway pardoned his jester.

CHAPTER XXI

FAITH REGARDLESS

I ARRIVED in Mianeh late at night and drove to the telegraph station, a combined rest-house and telegraph office set in a garden, where I was hospitably housed for the night by the operator. He was a Bahá'í and showered every attention upon me. Throughout Persia I noted the native ability to stay awake all hours of the night and yet appear fresh as a hyacinth the next morning. Despite my beauty sleep, I looked completely fagged, but I dressed and went forth to see Mianeh.

After a visit to the bazaar, whose principal attraction consisted of hundreds of skinned whole baby lambs—their mouths propped open with greens so that their tongues protruded—hanging before the stalls, I was sauntering down a narrow by-street when I was almost pulled through a doorway by a ragged and frantic young man, who kept mumbling to me. As I stood poised on the threshold, listening to his unintelligible flow of words, my guide held me back by the arm, and translated:

"His father is dead and he begs you to restore his life. He has heard that you are an American Bahá'í."

I caught my breath!

"Don't go in there! You will become infected by the plague."

I have always believed that diseases are contagious only when one's own resistance has been weakened by some physical or "mental" condition and, impulsively, I entered. The weeping youth led me through a horrible mud-floored room into a dark chamber, where an aged man in rags lay as though dead on a bundle of rags in one corner of the room.

Beads of perspiration stood on his forehead. I took out my mirror from my handbag, held it close to the parted lips and thought I perceived a slight moisture gather on the polished surface.

I laid my hand, with not a little misgiving, upon the clammy forehead and offered a prayer for the recovery of this poor creature, who, I thought, had breathed his last. To my horror the man slowly rose to almost a sitting position and blinked at me with the bewildered expression of one who has crossed the great divide and is happy to find human beings to greet him. The son broke into a tearful prayer. Hurriedly I laid a few tomans into the cold hand and rushed out into the sunlit street and back to the telegraph office, where I asked for a tub of hot water. I hastily divested myself of my clothing and literally scrubbed myself raw.

A few hours later the city of Mianeh was agog with the tale of how a European Bahá'í *khánúm* (lady) had brought a dead man back to life. Actually the aged man was crawling about in his hovel, peering through the door and praying to Allah to send his angel back to him. Despite his frantic pleadings, my Bahá'í colleagues dissuaded me from returning, insisting that he was afflicted by the plague.

While my fame as a miracle worker was spreading, and before the inhabitants had time to become disillusioned, I got into my tumbledown Ford and started out for Tihrán, strapping tins of petrol and oil sufficient for the journey to the running-boards.

I doubled back over a winding mountain road toward the Russian frontier, passing numerous trains of pack donkeys along the way. Suddenly the road widened and descended into a valley, through which the River Aji winds its flashing course. Barren rocks and wastes of clay gave way to orchards of strange fruits. Presently, as though forming a painted background for a section of yellow clay hovels, the walls of a town appeared, topped by the domes and minarets of many mosques, and almost completely girt by the white-peaked mountains in the distance.

After we had left the city behind, hours of one

harrowing experience after another followed, including eleven blow-outs. We were nearing Zanjan and I was congratulating myself that my troubles for the day were over, when we discovered the headlights had gone on strike. It was growing darker every split second. I agreed to go on, trusting to the keenness of my driver's sharp black eyes to keep us on the narrow, winding mountain road.

Suddenly the car stopped with a jerk as though it had hit a ridge and began tottering from side to side with a motion that left myself and the driver petrified with fear. I threw open one door of the car, clambered out upon the running-board and attempted to step out. To my horror, my foot was unable to touch anything solid. I tried the other side of the car, with the same result.

Expecting every moment that our car would somersault down some unseen chasm to the sound of rushing water that rose through the darkness from far below, I crawled from the running-board over the hood, stuck out a hopeful foot and struck terra firma again.

I lit match after match in an effort to pierce the darkness and ascertain our weird situation. We had evidently become marooned on a narrow neck of land. Finally, I was able to arouse the Armenian sufficiently to climb over the front of the car, keeping opposite the side where my trunk was apparently acting as a counter-ballast.

Too frightened to move, we clung to the hood of the car, wondering what would happen next, when I became aware of the distant rhythmic intonation of camel bells, followed presently by the hum of voices.

We slid off the radiator and crept forward toward the sound of the approaching caravan, my driver cautiously feeling his way ahead. In a few minutes the lights of swinging lanterns cut through the darkness a hundred feet ahead, as the camel train swung around the cliff. A minute later, a half-dozen astonished camel drivers were holding their lanterns near my face.

In the flickering light I saw that the car was stranded on a ridge so narrow that had we gone a foot to the left or right, we would have crashed down a forty foot

precipice, either into a rock-strewn chasm or the narrow river that flowed toward the wall of the city of Zanjan, a mile away.

I sat shivering, wrapped in my fur coat and rugs, while my driver and the others engaged in a parley as to how they would pass the car with their camels and donkeys. I decided that the Armenian should summon help from the city of Zanjan. Without hesitation he plunged down the bank in that direction. Later he informed me that he had run all the way in the shallow river till he hit the wall of the city and had blundered along in the darkness until he came to the gate. His shouts had aroused the watchman, who unlocked the gate. My drenched and bemired driver sped to the telegraph office and informed the astonished operator that a European lady was stranded in her automobile on the narrow caravan trail across the river.

The operator, who is a far more important personage in Persia than in most places of the world, despatched a vehicle, which much resembled Cinderella's coach, to my rescue. It was drawn by two horses and suspended on leather straps, apparently the latest innovation in transportation comfort at the time of Shah Abbas, the Louis XIV of Persia, when it must have been built. Its appearance was far more welcome than any Rolls Royce had ever been. I mounted the little ladder and made myself comfortable on the tufted cushions and watched the little maroon tassels on the felt-curtained windows bob up and down all the way to Zanjan with a joy that I had never before experienced. A team of horses was sent to extricate the car.

I learned from the telegraph operator that one of Zanjan's wealthiest business men was a Bahá'i and set out to find him at ten o'clock that night. The man was amazed to behold a Western lady standing in his hall, after the sleepy servant had permitted me to enter. When I told him of my adventure, he promptly sent for my luggage, ordered a silk mattress—a bolster of delicate brocade—partly covered with white linen, fine linen sheets and silk covers laid on the rug in the large living-room. A fine old brass water pitcher and accompanying

accoutrements were placed at the side, and the servant went off for food. As though we had known each other for years, we discussed world conditions and the more recent affairs of his native Iran. Finally, he left me, and I stretched out on the large, uncomfortable bolster, to sleep for twelve hours.

After a breakfast of tea and melon and an interesting chat with my cultured host, I started for Tihrán, overtaking on the way several jingling caravans and trains of donkeys and horses, laden with rugs and textiles, bound for the same destination. From my "American car" I viewed the plodding ships of the desert with the superior tolerance of an heiress of the ages for this primitive means of transportation. My triumph was of short duration, however. Scarcely had the tinkling bells of the last caravan been left behind in the distance when—bang!—the rear tyre blew out. The discouraged driver refused to move.

I hopped out and, by the use of forceful language and threatening umbrella, induced the driver to repair it with the patches of rubber and glue that my Tabriz friends had knowingly placed beneath the seat.

While I was supervising this process, I was chagrined to hear the far-off tinkle of bells swell into a crescendo and to see the camel caravan move slowly past.

Ten minutes later we had passed them again, with much derisive laughter on the part of both myself and the driver, when—bang!—the second rear tyre collapsed. Again, as the saying goes, I had to eat crow, and watch the most ancient and typically Oriental means of transportation plod majestically by.

After we had passed the caravan for the third time, the drivers of which were now laughing uproariously at us, the *third* tyre gave forth a sickening explosion. I let slip a flow of adjectives, descriptive of Persian roads and what have you. I was particularly anxious that we be on our way before those haughty camels and fiendish camelcers could laugh at us again. But after the tyre had been patched and replaced and while the caravan was still concealed from view by a turn in the road, the car, donkey fashion, decided to remain stationary.

Nothing that my supposed mechanic could do, and nothing that I could say, so much as brought forth a tremor from its venerable mechanism. Infuriated at the sight of that infernal caravan coming round the bend to pass us for the fourth time, I greeted the camels with a barrage of hard-boiled eggs. Then, with that out of my system, I unlimbered my portable typewriter, and began pounding out to my husband a circumstantial account of my adventures of the past ninety hours. Undoubtedly the driver thought me quite insane. At any rate, he later reported that "*Khánum*" had a most ferocious temper, had all but killed him with her tongue and umbrella and undoubtedly would have shot him had she been in possession of a gun. He admitted, however, that "her temper, though very quick, was of short duration. But, oh! when she is angry!"

I was busily engaged with my typing, the chauffeur with his fruitless tinkering, when my ears caught the distant hum of a motor, and far off I beheld an approaching car. It proved to be a party of Bahá'is, who, informed of my coming, had motored out to escort me into Tíhrán. They salvaged me from my shambles and drove me to Tíhrán, where a sumptuous feast awaited me and later sent back for my luggage and the begrimed and dishevelled driver.

Through the ancient central arch of the mosque-like Kasvin gate, I caught my first glimpse of Persia's capital.

CHAPTER XXII

CITY OF THE PEACOCK THRONE

BECAUSE the Persian conqueror Nadir-Shah is supposed to have carried this jewelled masterpiece from Delhi to Tihrán, the capital of Persia is still thought of as the City of the Peacock Throne. Compared with other Persian cities I had visited, it appeared a seething metropolis, its crowded Lalazar leading to a *maidan*, or square, surrounded by imposing places, government buildings and mosques.

Despite the florid reference in its name to the Peacock Throne, I saw nothing faintly resembling the splendour of either Mogul India or the Persia of Shah Abbas. In fact, except for an occasional turbanned mullah, and the black chudder-enveloped women, who thronged the *maidan* at dusk, even the clothing was prosaically Occidental. By forcing every tailor to furnish a military-looking cap with each suit, the present Western-minded Shah had cleverly effected a sartorial revolution. The old-fashioned turban was as dead as the dodo. With the turban went the prayer beads, the young blades deciding it decidedly more appropriate to swing a walking-stick than to carry their beads.

Despite this modern note, I was surprised to see that members of the opposite sexes, even though married, never walked together. Not only was a woman supposed to walk alone in the streets, but to avoid meeting any except her husband or close relations even in her home. She was forbidden to dine in public or attend public performances.

Tihrán naturally played an important part in the development of the Bahá'í movement. Here, as well as in Fars and Mazindarin, thousands were tortured and

put to death—some beheaded, crucified, hanged and others chopped to pieces.

It was in Tihrán on November 12th, 1817, that Mirza Husayn Ali, afterwards known as Bahá'u'lláh,¹ was born of a wealthy and distinguished family, and here where he twice suffered imprisonment for his convictions. Here, too, he had undergone the ghastly and inhuman torture of the bastinado.

I doubt if such a welcome has ever been extended to any visitor to Persia as that on my three visits which covered three successive years.

I found myself addressing audiences as large as ten thousand. One that remains like a bright star of glory in my memory was held in a tremendous garden, as large as a public city park, with a world of happy-looking people roaming about, and while they watched me being ushered to a raised platform and seated with dignity upon a high-backed chair one could have heard even the palm fronds swaying on the bank of greenery that rose behind me. In front stood a long table of rare woods inlaid with silver and gold and covered with a huge cone-shaped arrangement of shortbreads, tiny baby cucumbers, dishes of pistachio nuts and strawberries as large as apricots. My interpreter was a *scholar*—son of one of Persia's recognized modern poets. Of course, for a woman to appear in public to deliver an address before the masses was distinctly a novelty then. At first I felt extremely embarrassed, mostly because I feared my knowledge inadequate to deliver a full lecture. To my astonishment, however, my interpreter informed me that many of those present marvelled at my apparent knowledge. He assured them that I had never prepared my addresses before giving them, depending entirely upon inspiration. Never having given lectures of any consequence before, I was totally unaware that many of our best speakers write their addresses and, more often than not, commit them to memory before delivering them.

¹ Bahá'u'lláh translated means Glory of God, a title distinguishing the spiritual identity as prophet from the human identity, Husayn Ali. Similarly, Gautama, the Buddha; Jesus, the Christ.

Those days at Tíhrán on my first visit were a revelation to me, for I had not thought such people as those ardent Bahá'is existed anywhere on this earth.

It was my second trip to Tíhrán, however, that a real adventure, which might have terminated disastrously, befell me.

To appreciate it one must recall that Major Imbrie, the American Consul, had been barbarously assassinated here during a period of religious commemoration.

Now, ignorant of the details of Major Imbrie's tragedy and in search of antique souvenirs, I chanced to notice a light blue tiled counter that looked for all the world like an antique shop. I halted the vehicle and made straight for an open counter, which ran across the front of the building. A metal cup, attached to a long chain, reposed upon the counter.

After examining the cup, I set it down, leaned my elbows on the counter and scanned the old pictures on the wall behind. These framed figures of men of former days riding horses, into whose heads and bodies long spikes had been driven, intrigued me. No one was around—it being Friday, the Muhammadan Sabbath—and I stepped through the doorway to obtain a better view. The prints were very old. Complimenting myself on my find, I took one of the pictures off the wall to look for the price. Instantly my driver let out a warning yell and I noticed the street crowded with horrified and indignant onlookers. Sensing danger, I hung the picture back in its place, rushed to my carriage and drove off. A block away, I demanded of the driver why the crowd had gathered and stared at me in such rude fashion.

He clasped both hands to his head and talked so excitedly that I had to ask a passing European to translate his explanation to me.

"Good God!" he said. "You entered the sacred fountain where Major Imbrie was assassinated for merely photographing it."

The cordiality of the Persian Bahá'is followed me even after I had left Tíhrán by plane for Baghdád. My lone travelling companion, a British colonel, and I were



MAZANDARAN PERSIA

watching with interest a flock of black-robed figures gathered below as our plane slid down toward the landing-field at Hamádan.

As soon as the door of the plane opened and I stepped forth I was enveloped in a cloud of these black robes and literally swept some twenty yards distant.

The black robes, or *chudders*, were thrown back, revealing dozens of lovely Persian women, smiling joyously over what appeared to be an unusual occasion. One beautiful, dark-eyed girl explained excitedly that a telegram from the Tíhrán Assembly had been sent to the Bahá'í secretary at Hamádan, informing them that I should halt for a few minutes *en route* to Baghdád. When the engines started to roar the young women hurried me back, unintentionally blocking the Colonel's attempt to enter the plane, and closed the door after me. The Colonel eventually thrust them aside, opened the door and flopped in breathlessly as we moved off. As the plane rose in mid-air, the Colonel turned a bewildered face towards me and asked if I would mind explaining just what had happened. "I really felt quite a shock when I saw you disappear from view into all that swarm of black," he said. I explained that they had been my Persian Bahá'í sisters, splendidly educated women from the best families of Hamádan.

A short time later we were descending to a small aerodrome at Khanakin, where King Feisal's farm is situated, where we ripped the chimney and part of the roof off a mud hut, scurried through a newly ploughed field, and caught the terrified farmer on one wing, dragging him several yards, yelling in terror. Modernism occasionally reaches out an impetuous hand—even in far-off Persia.

CHAPTER XXIII

BAGHDAD RECHERCHE

I HAD radioed a request to Baghdád to have tea with His Majesty.

As I entered Baghdád in a speeding car, the hot, dusty air was filled with sizzling *shaslik* and the hubbub of voices mingled with the wailing notes of strange stringed instruments.

Upon my arrival at the Maude Hotel, the manager informed me that the King's aide-de-camp had telephoned several times during the past two hours that His Majesty was impatiently awaiting his missing guest. I dashed to my room and a few minutes later emerged transformed from a dusty traveller to a King's guest in a salmon-pink afternoon gown, salmon-coloured hat, black suede shoes and bag.

In my eagerness to reach the palace without further delay, I borrowed a big red touring car that I saw parked before the hotel and which belonged to a friend of the American Consul. When I reached the gates of the new palace—the King had moved since my last visit—the brakes refused to hold and I shot past the astounded guards and up to the marble-columned patio, where the emergency brake brought the car to an abrupt halt. To augment my undignified entrance, I accidentally jammed my elbow against the button controlling the horn. His Majesty, perhaps aroused by the clamour, opened the door at this moment, looked his astonishment at seeing me at the wheel, then hurried toward me with a broad smile on his face and hands extended:

"Both myself and the dry Martini cocktails have been impatiently awaiting your arrival!" he said, in quite understandable English. At our last meeting he had promised to speak English when I returned. He

escorted me to a reception-room thickly carpeted with gorgeous Eastern rugs and furnished with inlaid chairs and tables artistically arranged so that one sat facing, through open windows, a garden bright with roses and framed with verdant palm trees and tropical shrubbery. To my surprise real dry Martinis were served from a beautiful, heavily carved silver Tiffany cocktail shaker, *à la Park Avenue*, frosted half an inch thick.

It was late and the King invited me to return for dinner, asking what cuisine I preferred: French, Arabian or English. Laughingly, I said none of the three really appealed to me, but that I should be delighted with his choice.

I returned to the palace at seven-thirty, in a Paris frock of white chiffon with red sash and red slippers, this time in His Majesty's motor car, driven by an Arab in khaki uniform. Of course, I was seated at His Majesty's right. Opposite were King Ali, brother of Feisal, who had succeeded his father, Hussein, at Hedjaz, when the latter lost his throne; the Prime Minister and Tashin Kawdry, King Feisal's aide-de-camp. The last two were distinctly modern in dress and outlook. King Ali, in his Arabian costume, seemed a figure apart. He was small in stature, and wore a small turban above his delicately featured face. Devoutly religious, he spent much of his time in the mosques. He had lost his throne, he said, because of his unwillingness to accede to demands he believed to be against the interests of Arabia.

Although the dinner was the finest example of French cuisine, I displayed little appetite, much to His Majesty's concern.

"Do you always eat like a bird?" he asked. "Or is there something else that you would have preferred?"

I assured him that everything was perfect to the most minute detail.

In the drawing-room, over coffee and cigarettes from the fatal gold, diamond-encrusted cigarette case, we discussed the status of women in the East. All were extremely interested and agreed that woman's advancement can only be brought about by higher education

as set forth by the founder of the new World Order, Bahá'u'lláh. He had explicitly declared that there is no innate difference between male and female, they sharing in common all the faculties, and that God is no respecter of gender.

"Humanity," I said, "is like a great bird. Both wings—male and female—must receive the same impulse to enable it to fly straight. Woman must be given the same opportunities as man for perfecting herself in science and the arts. In the animal kingdom both sexes have equal rights. In the human kingdom which pretends to be a realm of brotherhood and solidarity, why should this question be raised?"

All were surprised that higher education for women had been included in the Bahá'i programme. Less than a year later I was delighted to learn that King Feisal had adopted several Bahá'i suggestions in his programme for Iraq.

Two days later, when he again invited me to the palace for dinner, King Feisal insisted that I suggest the menu.

"It would be quite impossible to obtain what I would really like," I laughed.

"Let me know what this impossible dish is!"

"Your Majesty, after several years' residence not far from Boston—the cradle of American culture and of the baked-bean industry—I have acquired a decided flair for Heinz pork and beans." His Majesty declared that I should have them.

It was dark when I drove through the palace gates into the tropical gardens for dinner and, as the car pulled up in front of the patio, I beheld a beautifully decorated table laid for two and lighted by candles. It was a sultry Arabian evening, with the star-studded sky hanging low like a canopy, a perfect setting for the dinner that followed. When the soft-footed servant arrived with the third course, I noticed a glint in the King's eye. On a solid gold dish, garnished with truffles and rose leaves, lay a steaming pile of golden baked beans!

During cocktail hour at the Club the following day,



ABDUL BAKI / Scrittore / C. C. I.
* 1890 / 1970

an officer of the British Royal Air Force told an amusing story of a much-troubled messenger from the Palace who, after searching the food marts of the city in vain, learned that a shipment of Heinz and Van Camp's pork and beans had just been bought by the British Air Force from the canteen. He proceeded to headquarters, requested three tins for the King as a special favour and departed for the Palace in triumph.

This time, over American baked beans, our conversation drifted to the subject of international confusion. King Feisal agreed that a great deal of misunderstanding was due to the multiplicity of languages. This, I remarked, was demonstrated at the League of Nations sessions where delegates' speeches and papers had to be translated at least twice. His keen interest in my observations during my visits to the Salle de Reformation at Geneva prompted questions on many of the subjects I had often heard discussed as I sat in the visitors' gallery watching the imposing scene.

"You are still promoting Bahá'í? I thought it would be a temporary interest. What do you find in it that is so much better than anything else? Weren't your parents Christians?"

"Certainly."

"Then tell me why you find it superior to Christianity—or my religion. What is wrong with Islam?"

The question seemed to clarify my own vision. A straight answer leaped to my mind.

"You know, Your Majesty, there are two salient features in this teaching that I have found nowhere else. First, it is the only religion that provides a rational, scientific proof of the existence of God."

His eyes opened wider as he leaned back in his chair and waited.

"Secondly, Bahá'u'lláh appointed Abdu'l Bahá as His only official interpreter. In future no one can possibly receive material reward for similar services, which is something that no other Revelation in the past was provided with. It can never become corrupted with theology as occurred with Christianity and Islam.

"Thirdly, it is the only spiritual Teaching in the world

that can be called a genuine Theocracy. The only other known theocracy is the ancient Hebrew. The institutions attached to all existing religious institutions are man-made. That all institutions for the government of the New World Order, from the Local Council to the International House of Justice, have been definitely laid out and clearly defined is one of its distinctive and unique features. It provides a method by which universal peace and economic stability may be attained, suitable to the hour in which we live."

His continued interest encouraged me to add:

"How would you react, Your Majesty, if one glorious morning in early spring, you knocked at the door of a friend's palace and invited him to open his barred windows and doors that he might enjoy the warm sunshine, the fragrance of the flowers, the song of the birds, only to be told that he knew all about the spring time, with its fragrance and the song of birds, that his grandfather had seen one hundred years ago. Like millions of others, this friend actually preferred to remain shut up in a musty house full of out-mode furniture to the joy and inspiration of the life-bringing springtime?"

"In other words, this is a renewal of life in the springtime of religion," he knowingly replied.

He was profoundly impressed—it was a moment I shall never forget—the gulf of East and West, speech and custom was bridged. We looked at each other—two souls sharing a quest.

We discussed world politics, the success and failure of the League of Nations, the broken pact of the "power that be" to secure Arabian unity, disillusionment of the Ibn Saud, hemmed in on all sides without a loophole of freedom, and the pitfalls of the document of Versailles that would unquestionably lead to further complication.

I was interested to hear of his experimental work at his farm in Khanakin, near Baghdad, especially in the production of cotton, which he believed could eventually do as much for Iraq as it had for Egypt.

There was something noble, yet pitifully sad about this King of Iraq, who died with his high hopes for

Arabia unrealized. During the World War he had led the united forces on the side of the Allies, influenced by Lawrence's promises that the great powers would guarantee the integrity of a United Arabia. Then, stripped of his rule over Syria by the French and established over the newly formed British protectorate of Iraq, he had found his scope limited and his dreams shattered. Devoutly religious, yet tolerant, and an idealist, this Arab king soon found himself in a world which is more interested in oil and trade advantages than in international co-operation.

Finally we strolled through the moonlit garden where King Feisal stripped the bushes to the last pink roses and presented the flowers to me with a salute. As the car passed through the gates I turned and waved a last farewell.

CHAPTER XXIV

CAMELS AND CADILLACS

"Far, far across the desert sands,
I hear the camel bells . . ."

HOW change runs through the sands of time ! When China and Persia were interchanging their lovely arts and crafts by the routes of commerce, Baghdád and Damascus were on the great highway from one empire to another. Camel bells grow fainter with time, and to-day the whir of a car becomes even more familiar over the desert sands.

Our modern chariot out of Baghdád was the last word in comfort—a de luxe Cadillac, running daily over the then new Nairne route which brought back memories of the Queen of Nomad's land ; although there is no passenger plane service between Baghdád and Damascus, we did not envy the speed of the Royal Air Mail overhead.

At Damascus a telegram awaited me. On the last lap of his world-tour my husband's business demanded his attention in America earlier than he had expected. My first thought was the speediest way to him. Beyrout was my nearest port—possibly I could catch a boat there to Marseilles and meet him in Paris instead of Switzerland.

Before leaving Beyrout I might even have time to make a motor dash to Haifa for another brief glimpse of paradise on earth before I set my face America-wards.

No such "winged chariot" as the Nairne route Cadillac was available at Damascus, and the best that I could secure landed me in Beyrout late in the afternoon. Yes, there was a boat leaving in the morning. Joy and disappointment. My husband, but no Haifa !

That night, while dining with the French Consul, a

waiter suddenly announced that the city was on fire. We dashed to the window, the sky was ablaze. The Consul ordered his car and a moment later we were racing towards the colossal conflagration.

The fire was in the warehouses and the Custom-House, at the end of the building where my crates of treasures containing beautiful embroideries, old prints and an ancient lamp from a mosque in Baghdád had arrived that day.

When we reached the scene of the conflagration, I jumped out, pushed my way through the crowds, police and firemen, over hose lines and through pools of water, the French Consul at my heels.

"Where is the Customs shed?" I asked.

"In that burning building over there," a police officer answered, "but you can't go there."

But my little French heels moved faster than his ponderous boots.

I darted past him and managed to elude a startled guard who made a desperate clutch at my arm, ripping my evening coat entirely off. I wriggled loose from another guard, leaving a portion of the back of my gown in his hands. Followed by guards, police and the shouting French Consul, I plunged through the smoke into the corner of the warehouse piled high with suitcases, boxes and crates being held for customs. Half of the building was in flames and the roof had caught fire!

The exasperated officer, fearing every moment that the roof would fall in, at my insistence dragged my belongings out, one by one, and set them in ten inches of water. A half-hour later the blazing roof collapsed. It was only then that I noticed my hands and face had become scorched by the terrific heat. For days my face was puffed and unsightly.

Standing ankle deep in mud and water, my hair dishevelled, my clothes awry, I watched the flames shoot into the sky—a sight horrible yet fascinating. Amid the uproar I was dimly conscious that the French Consul was shouting something in my ear. Sometime between five and six o'clock in the morning when the fire had been partially subdued, we made our way through the

crowd and returned to the hotel, having watched my treasures actually on their way resting on the shoulders of some sudden gallants from the ruined warehouse to the boat.

A couple of hours later I followed them on board, exhausted, my scorched face paining me severely. However, Paris and my husband were not far off.

Anxious as I was to see him again, I did not meet him before I had spent hours at Elizabeth Arden to remove all possible traces of my fire-fighting escapade.

I grudged the hours in the chair as the operator worked on me, but, "after all," I thought, "why not?" Aren't we all weary of ugly faces, bulging physiques? "Some sap," my thoughts ran on, "spent his precious time gathering useless statistics which nobody cares about to show the extravagance of beauty preparations. Suppose the yearly figures of how much women spend on cosmetics—even how much men are beginning to spend—do amount to billions—what of it? Let's have more youth, more beauty. There's enough ugliness, heaven knows—ugliness of body, mind and spirit, when the world was created so extravagantly beautiful." I glanced at newspaper headlines between pads and solutions—"War preparedness"—more hideous bloodshed and mangling of beautiful young bodies. Ugliness of graft in politics, ground out of the pockets of hopelessly deceived voters, while the fine and honourable men of the word are shackled hand and foot by the degenerate political machine, even if they would desire to raise a hand to change things. Oh, for the New Age!

It was good to look at my husband again—marvellous to have a companion along life's road who really understood! That was a crossing to be remembered.

CHAPTER XXV

DETOUR

A YEAR later while my husband was planning his itinerary for another world tour in the interest of his business, I brought forth my plan to journey through Transjordan by camel to Nedj, desert kingdom of Ibn Saud, the tales of which, told by King Feisal, had fired my imagination. Eventually my husband succumbed to the idea and my joy knew no bounds. We agreed to meet in Switzerland four months hence. He sailed for Japan, I for Gibraltar; Spain; Algiers—with her intriguing alleys and white-robed women; Fez and Basra, with her unforgettable minarets and, finally—Haifa.

I had stopped in London only long enough to call at the British Foreign Office for maps of Arabia, then cabled the British Consul at Damascus with regard to his contemplated journey to Nejd. The Sultan had promised through his Minister at Damascus to send an escort of one hundred soldiers mounted on camels and an additional hundred camels to meet him in Transjordan, south of Jerusalem.

Cordova, cradle of culture to a benighted Middle Ages Europe, fascinated me. Strange that Pope Cuthbert, a great Christian, and Maimonides, a great Jew, should have been fostered by this famous university of Islam.

Fez was another city of this trip recalling Maimonides, for here the broad scope of this twelfth-century scholar's vision was further nourished by his friendship with Abdul Arab Ibn Mursha, the Moslem poet of Fez. After this suspicious bent for the unity of men eight hundred years ago, what freakish opposition within himself caused Maimonides to champion Jewry to the extent of endangering his personal safety? This being

the reason of his seeking refuge in Cairo, his concentration on Jewish theology there was abruptly changed by a fate which plunged him into personal sorrow and financial ruin. He turned for succour to Cordova's gift of science to him, and as Islam had given the knowledge, Islam provided opportunity. He became physician to Saladin and was world renowned, adding to his success the distinction of marrying a prominent Moslem's sister !

Strange contradictions in this still famous and beloved scholar of Israel.

At Haifa a wire from Damascus was awaiting me. It was from the British Consul, informing me that the Foreign Office had forbidden his contemplated trek to Nedj. In my disappointment I almost wept. Months of anticipation was frustrated. Little did I dream of the "Sunburst" hiding behind my cloud of disappointment.

I spoke of the matter to Shoghi Effendi.

"I had expected to spend several weeks on this expedition," I began. "Now . . ."

"Since you have the time at your disposal, why not visit the Far East ?"

"You mean China, Japan ?"

"Well—India, Burma. How would you like to help your Bahá'í co-workers there ?"

Astounded, I exclaimed: "I would not dare to attempt to interpret this teaching."

"There is but one interpreter for the teachings, appointed by Bahá'u'lláh. Abdu'l Bahá did not leave us till his work was complete," he answered, firmly.

"I am not wise or clever enough to do justice to a message as great as this."

"But you have confidence and enthusiasm."

"The Far East, India, is the home of so many philosophies. I should have to face terrific arguments from men versed in occult science and religions far more ancient than Christianity. I have already met some who think they understand all the underlying principles of the universe.

"What could I do, face to face with this onslaught of learning ?"



TOMB ON MT. CARMEL OF FATE BAHYYEH KHANUM DAUCHI
(SEE MOUNTAIN PAGE 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Shoghi Effendi's dark eyes burned with a look of ineffable prophetic meaning, while I silently listened.

"Their learning belongs to the past. Its potency is on the wane. They also—the wise men—will have to turn their faces from dead Yesterday to living To-day and look beyond towards To-morrow. You need not feel ashamed of a lack of learning of the past. Your knowledge is of the future, and I will pray fervently in your behalf."

As I went to bid farewell to Bahíyyieh Khánúm, Bahá'u'lláh's daughter, I looked down at my frock, at my finger and bracelets of jade.

"Should I have to relinquish these for more ordinary attire?" I asked her.

She looked at me with her divinely beautiful eyes. "No, my dear."

Then, with her usual sound wisdom, she explained to me the value of grace and charm of dress and advised me not to affect an extreme attitude towards exterior things.

"Bahá'u'lláh," she said, "always commanded each member of his family to wear the best he or she possessed."

The Bahá'í intention is not to level down mankind to a standard of poverty, but to bring it up to the one of cultured education and beauty, she said.

"A new consciousness of beauty will be awakened, not of beauty as mere decoration, but as an essential element of a new economic condition where there will be no extremely poor."

"A Bahá'í," she said, "should appear equally at home in a palace or a cottage."

CHAPTER XXVI

CROSS ROADS

L YING on deck, under a lifeboat, head propped on elbows, I watched the sun sink into the Red Sea. The intervening water was turned to a shimmer of black which extended to the horizon line. What had been a cloud bank for a few minutes before, had now been magically transmitted into a luminescent Arabian panorama of gorgeous reds and dazzling yellows. . . . Stretches of gleaming sand-dunes; verdant palm trees, sandstone and basalt crags, towers of porphyry and jade, processions of Arabs in many-coloured robes, afoot and on tawny camels; black Bedouin tents . . . shifting . . . gleaming . . . changing. . . .

I became aware that several fellow-passengers were stretched beside me, gazing at the awe-inspiring spectacle. Thereafter we shunned the smoking-room and every evening watched the sunset until the last speck of yellow fire had vanished into the velvet of night. It was glorious to feel ourselves part of a world that could produce such beauty. . . .

On the fourth dawn Ceylon appeared on the horizon shrouded in blue mist, with its mountains—devoted to tea production—rushing upward in four giant terraces to a central snow-covered peak. As our ship drew closer, the mist dissolved, a luxuriant palm-edged shore grew visible, then church spires, imposing modern buildings, the extensive lawns of Galle Face. Through the breakwater we steered into the great harbour of Colombo and the centre of a rush of life—a score of steamers, wharves teeming with natives loading tea casks, outrigger canoes by the hundred with paddles lashing the blue water to a foam in their anxiety to

reach us first with loads of souvenir merchandise. The Singalese men with long hair held by horseshoe-shaped tortoiseshell combs in a womanish knot, Indo-Arabs in brightly coloured robes and plaited silk hats. The combs of the Singalese, a fashion affected only by the men, by the way, signifies that the wearers have never degraded themselves by carrying bundles, which are always borne on the head here.

Breakfast at the Galle Face Hotel was a meal made memorable by the superb view over the palm-fringed sea, the best coffee I had drunk since leaving America and my first taste of papaya—a delicious melon with bright orange meat, little black seeds and remarkable digestive properties. Here I learned that Galle, seventy miles away at the southern tip of Ceylon, was quite probably the Tarshish whence the ships of Solomon returned laden with cargoes of gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks.

It was from them, too, that I learned of Anuradhapura, the buried city erected by the Singalese Buddhists twenty-two hundred years ago, as ancient as anything yet discovered in India. It was to Anuradhapura that a Buddhist princess had fled from India in A.D. 311, taking concealed in her hair according to tradition a tooth of the great Gautama. A magnificent temple was built for its reception and the tooth borne through the streets of the city on the back of a white elephant on festive occasions. Seized during one of the numerous invasions of the Malabars, it was carried off to India, whence it was, however, ransomed. Later, the story goes, the Portuguese stole the tooth and destroyed it, although the Singalese believe that the sacred relic exists in the temple at Kandy.

My interest piqued by this account, I decided to head for Anuradhapura, not, however, before first motoring and rickshawing through the cinnamon gardens of Colombo, the parks of fig, palm, rain suriyas and bamboo trees, and to the native quarters with their mixture of Afghans, Malays, Portuguese, Dutch, Parsees, Moors, Tamils and Singalese in every variety of dress from breech clout to contemporary European linens.

Anuradhapura proved a fascinating spot—a mountain one thousand feet high, literally covered with shrines, inscriptions and sacred edifices, fruit of the devoted faith of the early Buddhist monks, toiling patiently to achieve marvels of architectural sculpture with hand-chisels about six inches wide. Overrun with trees and shrubbery, one entire side is converted into a grand stairway of one thousand eight hundred and forty steps . . . the remains of the royal pleasure garden twenty square miles in extent . . . the remarkable bell-shaped pagoda, or shrine, where the right collar-bone of the Buddha was once worshipped . . . the Palace of the Tooth . . . the sacred Bo tree which has grown for twenty centuries from a branch of the fig under which Gautama is said to have sat . . . a temple carved out of natural rocks overlooking crocodile-infested lotus ponds . . . the one thousand six hundred monolithic granite columns which once supported the Brazen Palace.

According to the Mahawansa, written about the fifth century A.D., this palace, entirely covered with brass tiles, was one hundred cubits square and high, and had nine stories containing one hundred apartments each, all highly finished in silver, with cornices embellished in gems and gem-set metal flowers and tinkling festoons of gold, a thousand dormitories having windows "with ornaments which were bright as eyes." In the middle of the palace was a gilt hall with an ivory throne, on one side of which glittered an emblem of the sun in gold, on another the moon in silver, and the third the stars in pearls. From the golden corners of the hall hung garlands of flowers formed of jewels.

I should have dismissed this description as largely compounded of the stuff of fairy tales had I not actually seen the Ruanweli Pagoda, in some ways fully as remarkable. Built in the second century B.C., this cone-shaped edifice rises to a height of two hundred and seventy feet from a platform apparently supported by nine-foot tall elephants fashioned of enamel-covered brick and one of them still bearing ivory tusks. The huge structure, the upper portion of which is covered so profusely with trees and other vegetation as to

resemble a hill from the distance, rests on a foundation laid one hundred feet deep and consisting of layers of crystallized stone and plates of cemented iron and copper laid alternately. This artificial hill, formed of millions of bricks and profusely carved and ornamented, was erected by a Singalese king both in thanks for his victory over a Tamil invader and in repentance for the shedding of his enemies' blood in battle. This touch of Buddhist gentleness even in the ghastly business of war impressed me as something completely overlooked in most victory commemorations—thought for the enemy fallen.

The monastery of the Brazen Palace, the Peacock Palace, of which only a few elaborately ornamented pillars remain; the colossal Jetawanarama, originally said to have been three hundred and fifteen feet high and whose tree-covered conical mass to-day towers to a height of two hundred and fifty feet; the hundreds of lesser shrines here and at Polonnaruwa, fifty miles distant, are amazing works of a people who have reverted from their former state of masters of Ceylon to their present one of menials.

For centuries the ideals of Buddhism seized these people and wrapped them as with a holy flame, inspiring them to build with a magnificence and imaginative sweep that makes our Gothic cathedrals seem dull and spiritless. Like all other peoples who for a time have seen the light and been thrilled by the insight of truth, the Singalese built better than they knew, only to lose their heaven-born gift the moment their inspiration was extinguished. At the very beginning of my travels through different lands, among different peoples and different civilizations I was to learn in this remote, little-known section of the globe, that no people can build higher than their faith, more grandly than their inspiration.

A trip by motor car to Kandy and Mount Lavinia terminated that year's tour of Ceylon and early morning found me aboard the steamer *en route* to Singapore.

Despite the heat we danced every evening on the immaculate Japanese steamer over tranquil seas. One gala night we sat shoeless on long mats upon the deck,

sipping *sake* and eating a delicious *sukiyaki* dinner, cooked in the centre of the table over burners of some sort. Overhead fluttered the flags of many nations, forming brilliant spots of colour against the midnight sky. When the whistles blew, the decks were cleared and a gay masquerade followed. It was the captain's farewell party for his passengers, the eve before our arrival.

Sixty miles through the Singapore Roads we steamed, past tiny emerald islands thick with jungle growth—an occasionally palm-leaf hut on stilts sticking out of the water—past fetid, steaming mud flats to the sudden man-made turmoil of Singapore's crowded harbour—Chinese junks with loads of palm thatch, buggies from the Celebes, ancient *baggalas* from India or Ceylon, dugout catamarans with outriggers, luxurious barges with cabins of teak, power schooners crowded with bales of merchandise, tramp steamers, trim slender liners—and everywhere swarms of canoes filled with brown-skinned Malay boys eager to dive for coins flung by tourists.

Singapore is "the cross roads of the East," port of call of more than fifty steamship lines, important cable and radio point and centre of an enormous world trade in rubber and tin. Its streets, modernized by the British, teem with men of all races, Chinese, Japanese, Tamils, Hindus, Malays, Europeans, with the Chinese dominant everywhere.

I was too intent, however, on pressing on to Borneo, which lies just across the South China Seas, to do more than crowd in a few hours' sightseeing and join a jolly crowd for dinner at the Gymkhana Club.

One evening after the movies, violating all recognized form, to avoid a sudden cloud burst, I stepped into one of the city's ten thousand rickshaws pulled by an opium-filled Malay runner. As I was being piloted through the narrow driveway of Raffles Hotel, a motor car slewed around the corner. The drugged brain of my runner was slow in responding, and I found myself hours later surrounded by strange faces. Automatically my hand flew to my mouth. Something as large as a grape, soft and pulpy, met my touch. I gazed aghast into a mirror

at what appeared to be a medium sized baked potato that had been scored and squeezed open so that the peeling stood out in four points. It did not occur to me that any human agency could repair so much damage, but the reassuring voice of the Dutch surgeon explained that it was really not so very bad. After nearly strangling me with a tumbler of cognac, this genius tucked away the protruding flesh with four silver clips. The clips were removed within forty-eight hours and with yellow powder thickly clinging to my lip and protected from inquisitive eyes by a green veil, I left for Java for a much desired rest away from the haunts of men. Five weeks later nothing more than a fine pink cross could be seen, and two years later the scar had completely disappeared.

CHAPTER XXVII

BORNEO

COMFORTABLY seated on the deck of our Borneo-bound ship, we watched the moon transmute the midnight blue sea into waves of white gold—two young Britishers from one of the banks in Singapore, on a fortnight's holiday, a padre, on his way to convert the heathen, and myself. As mortals will do, under spell of tropical moon and stars, the two young men discussed the distance and magnitude of the sun specks that form the Milky Way and then, the insignificance and futility of themselves, their bank, the human race and the earth. Probably for the benefit of the padre—a tall blond young man of perhaps twenty-eight, with a sandy Van Dyke beard—they launched forth on the unreality and uselessness of religion. Although I defended religion, I had plenty to say about theology and distorted creeds.

Comfortably lounging in rattan chairs, the discussion continued for a lively two hours over a tall whisky peg. Some of the men had their own Zanzibar chairs, which have long contrivances attached where the arms bend and swivel backwards or forwards so that the occupants can lie back and perspire in peace, with their feet up on a level with their arms. There is another piece of wood which also swivels, attached to the end of the arm, with a round hole cut in it to take care of the inevitable "peg." Scarcely had the Englishmen retired for the night, when the padre approached, and seating himself beside me, began :

"I overheard some of your conversation, and I take it that you believe the Catholic Church has failed, is obsolete, will be unsuccessful in gaining converts in the future and that the Bahá'i religion will replace it?"

"Well, you see, Padre, I do not deny the value of your work in penetrating the wilds and bringing at least some education to primitive peoples, for, after all, infants must drink milk before they are able to eat meat."

"And after they have had spiritual milk?" interjected the padre, smiling.

"Once civilized, the meat provided by the present system of orthodox theology will not be acceptable."

"What do you find to justify your statement?"

"Unless religion can fit into, and embrace every department of human life, unless it can be linked with economics, social, racial and international affairs, certainly it is not true religion. It is misnomer, and false in principle."

"What is religion but a way of life? It must fill the needs of the present day or it must eventually fail in its attempt to coerce an unbelieving generation of thinkers."

He showed a lively interest and no resentment at all—I continued:

"Humanity has evolved through many stages. It has long since passed through the primitive family and group, the community and provincial consciousness, and is even far in advance of the national. Do we not see the death pangs of a dying nationalism from every angle, and a spirit of unrest and revolt by the hitherto servile masses of every advanced country?"

"Thinking people are growing weary of rites imposed by theologians. Intelligent people realize that the institution of Christianity has failed and is cracking to pieces."

"Christianity began its long decline the middle of the seventh century when the influx of scientific knowledge purloined from far-off Arabia, was brought to Europe by Western investigators. Such branches of knowledge as physics, medicine, mathematics, astronomy, literature and art, were thus transplanted into European soil. On this foundation arose the fabric of much of our modern scientific development."

"Thus Islam formed a bridge that linked the barbarism

of the Dark Ages with Islamic culture at a time when Europe was fast sunk in the mire of superstition and ignorance. When the first experiments in major operations were being performed with success in Arabia, the people of Europe, her people, were paying the medicine-man to pray them out of their diseases. From that time can be traced the development of Islamic civilization that overran Christendom at Byzantium. The then Christian world failed to withstand the onward rushing forces of Islam, and its leaders turned their faces toward Germany and the Barbarians of the North."

"Still we manage to get converts."

"Yes, but can they be compared? The Bahá'í Faith does not proselytize. It attracts thinking men and women who investigate for themselves. Do you not, as you put it, 'convert' through fear of hell fire and brimstone, scaring the ignorant out of their wits?"

He smiled indulgently. "Please do not think I could ever belittle the utterly selfless devotion of the nuns who labour under the tropical suns in such dreadful places as Aden, enduring almost unbelievable hardships, fearlessly combating cholera, smallpox, bubonic plague and other deadly diseases of the East with unshakable courage; nor the Catholic Fathers one encounters in out-of-the-way islands, who, having dedicated their lives to the education of the native, sometimes never return to civilization—if you could call it that. I grant you all this, but humanity is starving for the unadulterated truth as taught by Christ."

Several discussions we had together; this genuine padre and I were the best of friends till the end of our trip, when we parted in mutual esteem.

The next morning a far-off speck on the sea ahead slowly grew into a vivid green mountain, its top wreathed by a haze of light. Gradually a verdant shore extended along the mountain's base. Long stretches of coco-nut groves appeared, then a settlement—Sandakan—with a dock where ships were loading the island's cultivated produce—rubber, tobacco, copra and sago.

The padre and others disembarked at Sandakan, which is the capital of British North Borneo, while I continued

to Jesselton, a tiny town which only the presence of the British military force and a few traders prevents from reverting back to the surrounding jungle from which it sprang.

As I stepped off the ship, the heated humid air of the jungle enveloped me like a blast from some gargantuan steam laundry. It is a heat that one who has ever visited Borneo always remembers—a heat that keeps Europeans in a constant state of perspiration and dribble. “Prickly heat” is only another of those little annoyances from which one suffers in the tropics.

I had gone to Jesselton under the misconception that the Governor of British North Borneo had his principal residence there. I soon learned that Sir William Rycroft and Lady Rycroft spent most of their time in Sandakan and only a short part of the year in Jesselton. Mrs. Bateson, wife of the agricultural adviser, and Mr. Maxwell Hall, another resident, were most gracious to me. During the two and a half days of my stay I met almost all of the European and American people in Jesselton, at luncheons, teas and dinners. I learned that one Englishman had heralded my arrival with advance information that a missionary was arriving with a “do as you please religion.” He, like myself, had been accustomed to the superfluous “don’ts and must-nots” of what passes as religion. His version of St. Francis’ axiom to “Love God and do as you please” was amusing and refreshing.

Ali Baba’s oil jar looms large in Eastern romance. For me it figures more important in Borneo’s simple bath-houses. I did my best with the primitive equipment, lathering my body and pouring water over myself from the jar with the dipper in approved fashion. I’ll admit to one or two plunges into Ali Baba’s jar, though I was careful to have the natives change its contents immediately.

Heat and mosquitoes are the twin miseries of Borneo, and eventually almost every European resident contracts malaria. The anopheles, or malaria-carrying mosquito, not only looks different from the regular butterfly variety, but is a wicked little wretch who advertises his presence by an insistent humming sound

and by standing on his head to puncture one with his proboscis. In every bedroom occupied by Europeans are supposedly mosquito-proof beds, which a native bed boy rids of the creatures by raising hail Columbia inside the net with a long switch fashioned of fine bamboo splits.

It is exasperating to hear the singsong of these pests about one's head after having performed the ritual of closing the canopy for the night and crawling in in one's birthday suit. It is still more irritating, after a second house-cleaning, to slip through the opening and find that one has smuggled in another barbed butterfly.

At certain times of the year another form of visitor makes an appearance, and I am informed it is advisable to leave a complete trail of "Keating's Insect Powder" around the bed and upon the sheets. One must then carefully step inside and lie down, hoping for peace. Such is the East!

Concomitant institutions are the electric fan and the dutch wife—a bolster about twelve inches in diameter which one is supposed to clutch to one's stomach to avoid the otherwise inevitable chill that one gets from the fan. When the *modus operandi* of the dutch wife was explained to me the first night in Colombo, I assumed it to be some local witticism and had the long bolster, the only article on the bed except the sheet and pillow, removed.

The predicted chill followed, with attendant stomach cramps so violent that I had to summon a doctor in the night. He explained that the dutch wife is really not a practical joke. I spent the remaining nights in Borneo under the breeze of the powerful fan, in complete comfort, my dutch wife clutched to my tummy by means of a knee hold.

On account of this degenerating climate, European women are constantly coming and going—one or two years being the longest they can remain without becoming languid and pasty-looking. Every European woman, of course, has a regiment of servants and every child has an *ayab* (nursemaid).

There are no more beautiful women anywhere than

among the Tamils of Borneo, Singapore, and Southern India—*petite* creatures, with complexions ranging from olive to chocolate brown, cameo-like features, erect and graceful, dainty hands and perfectly shaped feet. The Dusans looked the oddest when dressed in their Sunday best—pointed coolie hats, white cotton blouses and black Eton jackets—beautifully adorned with fine embroidery, silver beads, silver braid and magnificent silver belts from two to four inches wide, hung with bells and strange ornaments.

The origin of the races that make up Borneo's polyglot population is an interesting study in anthropological lore. The Malays on the coast are Moslems and the Dusans and other inland people are "pagans." My curiosity to see how people who go in for head-hunting and believe in the spirits of thunder, fire and other natural phenomena, carry on the rounds of ordinary life, was unexpectedly satisfied. Mrs. Bateson accompanied me into the interior, up the crocodile-infested Papar River to two native Dusan villages. Mr. Surfleet, the district officer, who is called the D.O., acting as our guide.

The "train" which carried us into the jungle to the Papar consisted of a single long car, with wooden benches on either side, accommodating about forty people, pulled by an antiquated locomotive, built heaven knows when and where, and burning wood. Every half-hour or so the engine would run out of fuel, the train would stop, the fireman or someone else would jump out to gather fuel in the surrounding jungle and fields. In this leisurely fashion we managed to do the thirty-six miles in six hours.

As we chugged up the winding, shallow river in a motor launch, the exhaust of the motor awakened the unseen furred and feathered denizens of the jungle, a bedlam of shrill shrieks, mocking whistles and chattering arose and the log-coloured crocodiles, sunning themselves along the banks, made loud splashes as they disappeared into the brown waters. A few weeks previous a native had been lifted out of his *sampan* by a crocodile before the eyes of his horrified companion, and

dragged beneath the muddy depths. The village organized a hunt for the monster, offering a reward for its capture, and two weeks later it was caught, slain, and when opened found to contain a human rib, a tooth, and some ornaments which had belonged to the victim. For this reason I scrutinized with particular care each floating log, with the gruesome thought that one might suddenly lift its ugly head over the side of the launch.

In the occasional clearings, on either side of the river, natives in breach clout or sarong could be seen pounding a sago with pestle and mortar in the time-honoured manner of their forefathers, or loading their *sampans* with coco-nuts and palm oil. Just as we reached our destination, we beheld at least a dozen *sampans* thronged with natives industriously casting spears and plying nets in a sort of corral of bamboo pickets covered with leaves and grass in midstream. Spears and nets flashed up and down, bringing back wriggling fish, which were loaded into the *sampans* as fast as human arms could work. A picket fence, with a narrow opening into the corral, stretched across the river just beyond, leaving the fish no alternative course on the way downstream. Mr. Surfleet explained that the natives had paddled upstream a dozen miles in canoes loaded with tuba root, filled the canoes with water, beat up the tuba root in the water until it had formed a soapy foam, emptied this mess into the river and allowed it to float downstream with the canoes toward the corral, driving the fish before them.

None of the sentimental delights of angling for the true Dusan! His sole object in fishing is to get his fish, and he succeeds in supplying the family larder and the markets at Jesselton and Sandakan with all the fish that one can eat. Rice and fish—fresh when it can be obtained, otherwise dried and served with plenty of peppery spices, and condiments of various kinds—are the principal articles of diet.

The method of transporting pigs to market is another custom which would be frowned upon by the S.P.C.A., the creature being thrust upside down into a rattan open-work bamboo mesh so that its feet stick upward through

openings. Then, by means of long bamboo poles thrust through holes in the mesh, the pig is borne to its destination, screeching murderously.

In a luxuriant tropical setting of palm, coco-nut and tall branchless tapang trees and bushes, we came upon a native village. By climbing over a primitive stile, or ladder, we were able to reach the first house. Like the others it was built of bamboo, square in shape, about the size of a large living-room and mounted on piles beneath which chickens, pigs, dogs and other small creatures found shelter from the burning midday sun. Above were the living quarters, partitioned into two or three rooms, with bamboo mats serving for beds, couches and floor coverings.

A girl-mother, little more than a child herself, was squatting on a bamboo mat, stuffing rice down the throat of her three-weeks old baby. I questioned Mr. Surfleet for the reason of this perversion of everything I had ever heard about infant diet. He turned to her for explanation.

"She believes that rice makes them strong and healthy," was the reply.

"But our infants get nothing but milk and a little orange juice at first," I protested.

Again he inquired.

"They are white and therefore blessed at birth, so that they can get along without special feeding," was her reply. "Dusan children would die on such a diet."

With the district officer still acting as interpreter, I vainly attempted to dissuade the little mother from her rice jamming.

She shook her little brown head. It had long been the custom and it was well known among her people that rice brings life and health, she said. She continued to stuff the grains of rice down the protesting baby's throat.

Thinking that perhaps there was something after all in a custom so well established and so long practised among the native mothers, I asked Mr. Surfleet the mortality rate among native infants.

"It is eighty-five per cent," he said. "This rice stuffing is one of the principal causes."

As in Burma, women hold a commanding position in many of the tribes of Borneo, although they also perform most of the difficult labour. They are "Head-men" of some villages. They manage the schools, weave mats, superintend the building of houses, direct the affairs of the *campong*, while their husbands fish, hunt or work in the paddy fields.

In one village I was thrilled to find ancient divorce laws still prevailing. If a woman accuses her husband of infidelity or abuse before the magistrate and fails to prove his guilt, the man has no recourse. She may continue to nag and reproach him, stating her views of the matter with impunity. On the other hand, if the husband accuses his wife and fails to produce sufficient evidence to warrant securing a divorce, he must take her home again, and, if he so much as opens his mouth to mention the matter, let alone drop insulting or insinuating remarks, she may march him straight back to the magistrate. As a penalty the husband is obliged to provide a feast for the entire community and publicly make his wife a gift, worth at least five dollars—usually of hens, chickens or pigs.

If the wife wins a divorce, the husband must pay her a stipulated sum. If the husband is awarded a decree, he gets nothing—but the satisfaction of being parted. In other words, in Borneo it is the man who always pays. Which may be what makes the wild man of Borneo so wild!

On account of these laws, the sound of verbal altercations between "wife and man" ring through the *campongs*, the woman, having nothing to lose, loses no opportunity to broadcast her exact feelings concerning her husband's deportment.

Back of the river, and the little clearings won by man, the jungle rules supreme, its hor, moist breath speeding the life-death cycle and the fascinating, sinister struggle between the living worlds of vegetation and animal life. Within a range of a few miles one finds rubber trees, gulta, rattan, mangrove, coco-nut palms, ironwood,

bananas, camphor, cinnamon and cotton trees. Orang utans (jungle men literally), gibbons and monkeys leap about in the dense jungle, although the smaller and less savage are found close to the villages and make their presence known by screaming at man's intrusion and hurling down coco-nuts from great heights with terrific velocity. Dense bushes, vines that stretch wiry stems from tree to tree, leeches that jump from leaves to intruders' legs and cling, sucking blood; malaria mosquitoes, deadly insects, and above all the enervating heat of this humid hot-house, drowsy with the scent of earth, form other barriers for those eager to penetrate its green mysteries, lured by the flaming deep-scented flowers and huge black orchids that grow high up on the trees.

CHAPTER XXVIII

BUFFETED

WE returned by motor-boat and wood-burning locomotive train to Jesselton and a day later I sailed for Sandakan, another city of some ten thousand inhabitants, set between the sea and the jungle at the foot of a towering mountain, its timber roads winding between hills covered with luxuriant grass, vivid flowers, lovely gardens and residences. Conspicuous among them were the brown-stained, wide verandaed homes of the British, dotted about one side of a hill facing the little city.

Life's social round had acquired a very different aspect since the days when oblivion had seemed my only refuge from it. Table conversation now had some purport. I was genuinely happy to accept invitations to tiffin with the European ladies of Sandakan. They had heard rumours of the "missionary" and perhaps for them I might offer a break in the monotony of tropical colonial life.

Their curiosity changed to interest as we chatted travel, world affairs and religion. They invited me to address several groups more formally.

All the apprehension that had swept over me when Shoghi Effendi had first suggested the Far East had completely disappeared.

The next day I went into a shop and found the native proprietor a man of fine intelligence. We fell to chatting and he invited me to his home to meet his friends. They spoke excellent English, were mostly as intelligent as he and seemed eager to learn. I felt quite at home with these natives.

The day for my talk to the ladies arrived. Was it my imagination or was their reception chilly? I did my

best—but left with misgivings, not knowing exactly where I had failed but—the barrier was real though only sensed.

Later that afternoon I met one of my native acquaintances and stopped to greet him. Two of my fellow luncheon guests drove by and in a flash their expression revealed the *faux pas*. It was socially healthier to remain among the ruling class!

My luggage had been snugly tucked away in the S.S. *St. Albans* bound for Manilla and Hong Kong when another of my “unacceptable” native acquaintances came hurrying to the steamer to inform me that an official of the Persian Oil syndicate had just arrived. The little group was devastated by his tales that all the Bahá'is he had met in Persia were opium addicts and worse.

Immediately I ordered the coolies to remove my luggage from the ship, hunted up the Oil representative and for more than an hour in the presence of an interested audience gave him a word picture of the thousands of remarkable Persian Bahá'is I knew. With the termination of this discussion he was willing to acknowledge that the specimens he had met were not Bahá'is at all, but bitter antagonists and more often hashish addicts.

Meanwhile my ship sailed and no others were scheduled for ten days. The only alternative was a Chinese junk leaving in about forty hours. I decided to book passage if they would take me.

Ruminating, I was mortified at my failure, more concerned over my own shortcomings than the Persian Oil man's brickbat.

As though for encouragement I unexpectedly met someone who had heard of the Bahá'i faith and had stayed at the same house with Abdu'l Bahá in Glasgow before the latter's visit to America in 1912 and was still deeply impressed by that meeting. He was eager to know more so I taught him all that I knew.

But Borneo's buffetings and my follies were not over!

I had heard of marvellous black orchids in the nearby jungle. I hired an open five-passenger Ford, accompanied by a guide. I instructed the native sarong-

garbed chauffeur to drive me, first to a native village a few miles outside of Jesselton, then to the end of the road which penetrates eight miles into the wilderness and marks the boundary of effective control of the British constabulary. The territory beyond was taboo! I climbed out and, over the protests of my guide, struggled through a tangled jungle, lured by the immense black orchids I knew abounded there.

It was like stepping into a huge moist greenhouse, filled with cries of furious monkeys chattering overhead, screaming birds, and an overpowering smell of earth and growing things.

A cluster of heavily scented flowers almost overpowered me and I felt tempted to sit down, but, just having extricated myself with some difficulty from a blood-thirsty leech I dared not give myself up to forces vibrating around me and the desire to rest on so viscous a couch. At that moment a large coco-nut landed about two feet in front of me, aimed by some outraged monkey with such violence that I decided to avoid meeting any of his more aggressive simian kin.

Hurrying in the direction of the road, I spied a large black orchid clinging tenaciously to the shaggy trunk of a huge tree. Exultant, I called to the guide, who started reluctantly through the thicket. While he was attempting to pluck the blossom just beyond his reach, I discovered another, ever larger and more magnificent black orchid on the next tree. Impulsively I turned to see an almost naked native, his arm upraised ready to plunge a *kris* into the back of my guide. Frozen with horror and fear, unable to articulate a scream, I tried to catch the *kris* on its fatal descent. Instead I found myself petrified, with the blade sticking in my own arm two inches below the elbow. The native vanished as silently as he had come. The frantic guide made a gentle attempt to remove the ghastly dagger, but it was so firmly embedded in the bone that it would have taken more courage than I could summon to let him dislodge it. For the first time in my life I was overcome by a dreadful nausea. Feeling as though my inner ingredients had evaporated I reached the car. Painfully I tried to balance my arm in

the air to keep the heavy jagged *kris* steady, as we bumped along the wavy road. If only Borneo had had a Walter Winchell,¹ maybe I wouldn't have had to go after my own orchids!

At the local village the physician, a white man who had fallen upon evil days, informed me a few moments after he had wrenched the *kris* from my arm that the knife had been dipped in snake venom, the deadly poison in common use among head-hunters who inhabit the mountains. To this interesting bit of information he added the cheerful conviction that my life would be of short duration unless I had my arm removed from the shoulder.

This sudden crisis gave me the second occasion to use the faith I professed—to call upon God, who, after all, is the only source of succour in time of desperate need. For a moment I weighed the idea of consenting to the loss of my arm. Suddenly a feeling of certainty an inner consciousness of protection, surged through my being.

I made my decision. I knew that destiny had lifted another finger. Quietly I told the doctor that I would risk keeping my arm. A small bit of splintered bone was removed and my arm was neatly swathed in bandages below the elbow, and with faith high, I defied snake venom and boarded a Chinese junk headed for the Sulu Sea.

¹ A famous American critic, whose catchword is: "Orchids to you" when he is indicating prize for a favourite.

CHAPTER XXIX

CLAMOUR, CULTURE AND JADE

THE *Chang Sang* was a small Chinese freighter, or junk. I did not know what "junk," which is a Chinese word, means literally. But it looked and smelled exactly as though the word were English. I had scarcely lifted the cover of my suitcases, in the only stateroom on board, when nine or ten cockroaches ranging from two to three inches in length and three-fourths of an inch wide, began a march across the floor protesting my invasion of their squalid quarters. When I opened the closet door their leader flew at me and struck me on the forehead. Horrors!

I made a frenzied search for the captain, and induced him to let me sleep on deck. He curtained off a portion of the deck next to the rail by means of a tarpaulin and ropes. Under a blazing sun which beat through canvas and in a temperature that never fell below ninety degrees, despite the motion of our ship, we slowly pushed through the Sulu Sea.

It was absolutely breezeless and "hot enough to fry fish," as the skipper said. Making conversation, he spent most of the first morning telling me that whenever the sea is as calm and sultry as this, it is a sure sign of an approaching typhoon.

Across my tarpaulin but within ear and nose-shot, scores of Chinese and Malays, surrounded by crates, bags and cooking utensils, packed every foot of the decks—some stretched out on the boards fagged by the heat, others drying fish on wooden racks, still others mending nets, repairing ship flags, cooking and eating food, or washing clothes, the last task continuously necessitated by the perspiration that poured off their bodies.

As we emerged from the Sulu into the Chinese Sea, flying fish and sharks began to make their appearance, breaking into white foam the enamelled surface of the deep blue water. The flying fish became more numerous as we neared the Chinese coast, often leaping from the water and flying a hundred feet beside our ship before gracefully plunging. These piscatorial acrobatics, the captain explained, are no mere expression of *joie de vivre* on the part of the actors, but a desperate attempt to escape pursuing game fish and very much like the efforts of a fugitive crossing water to shake off keen-scented blood-hounds.

Shortly after dawn had burst out of the aquamarine sea, the green peak of Hong Kong loomed across an intensely blue ship-filled harbour rapidly growing until the city would like a girdle around its base become visible. Ships flying the flags of every nation rode in the harbour—huge *de luxe* passenger greyhounds, capacious smoke-belching freighters, paddle-shelled steamers, tramps, junks and *sampans* bearing patched, bat-winged sails of canvas, bamboo or reeds.

Long before we reached the pier I was conscious of the teeming life on the island, which the British, with a genius for disregarding native intent, call Hong Kong. The native name, which means "sweet waters," is Haiang Gang. Long lines of coolies were patiently trotting up and down gang planks and along the wharves between ships and warehouses bearing astounding loads. Men, women and children thronged the wharves and streets beyond. Double-decked street cars and coolie-powered rickshaws dashed along the principal street. In the background a cable car spiralled upward to the top of the cloud-wrapped peak.

The port physician climbed aboard with the disconcerting announcement that smallpox was raging in Hong Kong and that it would be impossible for me to disembark before I had been vaccinated. Pointing to my still bandaged arm I exclaimed:

"Why, I've been inoculated with enough snake venom to make me immune from anything!"

The doctor looked at me as though he suspected that

I was out of my senses. Then, when I made it plain that I would positively not be vaccinated, he drew up a document, which he made me sign, to the effect that I assumed all responsibility for my own safety.

Since those great colonizers, the British, induced China to cede them the barren island of Hong Kong as indemnity for attacks on British subjects back in 1842, they have converted a former pirate hide-out into one of the world's show-places.

The raw, rocky hill-sides have been clothed with trees, shrubbery, terraced gardens and charming residences through which asphalt roads twist and climb from one lovely vista to another. There is the famous Hong Kong Hotel with a justly celebrated cuisine; a famous race-track, where officialdom and its wife turn out in full regalia; a flower market, shops of jade and amber and Delhi ivory.

At the top of the island and the Peak are the more sumptuous homes—below, in the centre are the shops, and at the water's edge the wharves and shanties, where the desperate natives cling precariously to life. Throughout most of China there are no draft animals; automobiles and gas are too expensive, and consequently human power does all the work performed by horses, mules or camels elsewhere. Coolies pull foreigners or more efficient natives along the streets in rickshaws or bear them up the steep ascent on palankeens; women carry what to white men would be staggering burdens of stone on their heads, in wheelbarrows or carts; hand-load machinery at the docks; become human gas-engines at the derricks and take the place of mules on the towpaths and automatic hammers in cutting through the rocky hill-side to make way for new improvements, all on a diet of rice, plus an occasional fish or bit of meat.

It is said the estimated cost to the United States missionary societies of converting the "heathen" is between twenty-five thousand dollars and fifty thousand dollars a head and that the converted "heathen" usually reverts to his native gods, after receiving the benefit of a mission education. This, however, meant

very little to me. I was determined to do my small part in making Bahá'í faith known in a few centres of culture in China, and, realizing the Chinese respect for the printed word, I was particularly anxious to have Bahá'í literature distributed at strategic points.

This might seem to some very much like carrying intellectual coals to Newcastle, when we consider that Chinese culture was ancient when our forefathers were eating their raw meat in the Hyrcanian forest, their code of ethics venerable when our ancestors were worshipping oak trees. The way of life codified by Kung-fu-tze some fine hundred years before Christ, has persisted longer and has probably influenced more human beings than any other religious, philosophical or ethical system. Yet I was hopeful that fresh coals would prove living ones.

Without the least warning I was looking into the face of a very dear friend I had last seen at "Green Acre" the previous summer, and to whom I had laughingly said: "Sometime I would like to accompany you to China on one of your lecture tours!"

Here we are face to face, both having left America from opposite ends of the continent.

Miss Martha Root, a journalist from Pittsburg, International Bahá'í lecturer and world traveller, very much desired to address the students at the University of Hong Kong the following afternoon before embarking for Australia.

Together we called at the office of the Registrar, who advised us to locate the president of the student's union. We found this stately Chinese student eventually in the immense library. He was probably twenty-four years of age, wore English tweeds and English brogues. The corner of a handkerchief neatly protruded from his breast pocket and a walking-stick was smartly tucked under one arm. Later we learned that he was the son of a Chinese multi-millionaire who had made the education and westernization of Chinese youth his chief interest.

Miss Root inquired if it would be possible for us to address the students the following day.

"On what subject, Madam?" asked the young man in flawless English.

"Peace, and what students can do to help bring it about!"

"Splendid!" exclaimed the young man, and although a student banquet had been scheduled for six o'clock that day, he had the hour changed to seven and arranged to have us appear at five o'clock.

The lecture-hall was filled with the most attractive, intelligent-looking, even brilliant assemblage of Chinese youth I have ever seen. Sitting motionless, some half-leaning on their canes, they listened with keen interest and undivided attention, their dark eyes sparkling with understanding. When we had finished and the meeting was thrown open for discussion, they arose to their feet with eager questions:

"What is the outlook for world peace?"

"Are the youth of other countries doing anything to secure it?"

"Is it possible for the youth of the entire world to organize a united agitation against war?"

For a half-hour questions and answers, like currents of electricity, ran through the audience. When one considers that only within the last dozen years has Chinese literature broken away from the language and subject-matter of the classics—a break comparable in a measure to Chaucer's abandonment of Latin—the response of these young Chinese was amazing.

"Would you care to have some books for your library explaining the movement for world unity and peace," I asked. Their acceptance was instant and unanimous. Their faces lighted as one, with huge smiles, and I was asked to autograph the books, which now command a prominent place in the University library.

The evening before my departure, a Persian owner of a Java to Aden shipping line, which carries pilgrims from Malay and Java to Mecca, entertained us in sumptuous fashion at the Hong Kong Hotel. Later we went to his delightful summer home nearby to see his priceless collection of jade, amber, ivory and porcelain.

As we drove back along the bay to Victoria—official name for the city itself on the island of Hong Kong—the moon filtered through the clouds, throwing the flowered terraces into shadowed relief, and decorating the black water with patches of quicksilver on which the candle-lighted shapes of bat-winged sampans nodded.

Hong Kong, with its British influence, makes one feel acutely conscious of the all-Chinese city of Canton less than one hundred miles away—so near, yet like another world. I would go up to Canton and talk to Dr. Sun Yat Sen.

Taking the night boat ninety miles up the pirate-infested Pearl River to Canton is something of an adventure. At midnight, all lights out—a precautionary measure—the craft got under way. The quarters of the officers in the bows were fenced off from the rest of the ship by a sinister prison-like steel cage. A huge steam hose controlled by a valve on the captain's bridge and with an immense threatening nozzle, ready for action in case of mutiny or attack, guards the cage, and sentries patrol the decks, each armed with two loaded rifles.

For more than an hour I watched the lights of Hong Kong fade away in the distance as we crossed the bay and turned up the river. I do not know how long I had been in bed when I was awakened by voices shrieking "Bandits!" Without the slightest consciousness of what I was doing, I found myself under my bunk, pillow and all.

There were shouts, the sound of running feet, a prolonged hiss and finally the most blood-curdling shrieks I have ever heard. A few minutes later came reassuring quiet. I crept out of my hiding-place, slipped into a robe and joined the crowd of passengers on deck.

The captain was assuring them that the incident had ended and we were quite safe. Half-way to our destination in the inky darkness the pirates had reached our boat on a sampan, swarmed up by the side somehow and were trying to open the door in the iron grill when they unknowingly touched off the alarm. The captain immediately signalled and a flood of live steam was

loosed upon the invaders. As to the fate of pirates, he and the other members of the crew were quite indifferent. The law was lax and it was considered a sheer waste of time to rescue pirates and bring them to trial.

"It's up to every ship to protect itself," said the captain.

An hour later dawn arrived. The veils of darkness lifted from the river, disclosing the hilly country of Hong Kong giving way to a wide and fertile plain of olive-green ricefield cut into an irregular checkerboard by willow-lined irrigation ditches, and to successive clusters of mud hovel villages shaded by banana plants and bamboos. Past Whangpoa, Honam Island with its two pagodas, and the hills called White Cloud Mountain we steamed. Suddenly a city of boats appeared, like a gigantic swarm of rats clinging to the shore of a surprisingly Western-looking water-front—weather-beaten boats, with patched and torn sails of all shapes and materials—cloth, reed, bamboo.

They stretched as far as the eye could see, divided by water streets, into sections and blocks. Each boat was occupied by an entire family, busily engaged in the multiple tasks of home-making—cooking, eating, washing clothes, and bargaining with river-faring peddlars who paddle from boat to boat. Secured to the rail by rope, children waddled about the decks. It was my first view of the congestion and poverty which forces 200,000 Chinese, in Canton alone, to cling thus precariously to existence on their bartered houseboats.

A concomitant stench of crowded human life rose from this floating city and the greater city on the shore.

Hong Kong has a population of some forty-five thousand; Canton of perhaps twenty times this number. Back of the row of Occidental-looking business buildings that line the Bund, run miles of narrow, mazelike streets, filled with strange sights and smells and an incessant flow of life. Houses with oyster-shell balconies leaning over the stone block pavement; rows of shops, where artisans fashion articles of ivory, bone, amber, jade, birds' feathers, paper, bamboo, rattan, mahogany and pearwood—the thousand and one materials in which

the Chinese have worked for centuries with amazing skill. Despite bargaining there was little cash left in my handbag. I had happily exchanged it for something much more precious—jades whose carving beggars description.

Through the labyrinth of temples and pagodas, filled with gods and demons; open-air restaurants, and theatres filled with the cymbal's din, the wail of fiddles, smelly incense and filth flows an endless eddying stream of yellow-skinned men, women and children. Coolies bend under loads of fish carried in tubs suspended from bamboo poles. Rickshaws serpentine in and out among girl-jugglers stunting before a crowd, ragged beggars, hawkers of fruits and nuts, flower-girls and women carrying pox-stricken babies to medicine shops.

As I was borne through the narrow streets in a sedan chair by coolies, little children held out supplicating hands with oozing blisters on their fingertips.

I was walking along the Bund—the principal street which skirts the water-front, when an automobile shot toward me at full speed, scattering traffic to right and left, and I found myself staring into the muzzles of two large revolvers. It was only the Mayor's car, however, and the revolvers, cocked for action, were in the hands of uniformed bodyguards who rode on the running-board.

Guerilla warfare was being waged between the forces of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, head of the Constitutionalist Government, whose capital was at Peiping. The town was full of soldiers, ex-soldiers, ruffianly pirates, all eager to get on some army pay-roll where they could draw enough cash to pay for rice, opium, gambling and women, by chopping off opponent's heads or destroying their property. The temple of the Five Hundred Genii, one of the show-places of Canton, had already been pulled down and the blue-black bricks sold to feed the hungry mercenaries. This temple had been established A.D. 503 and was one of the wealthiest in Canton. All church property in fact had been confiscated by Sun Yat Sen's government, some for use as military barracks, others to be sold to anyone who would buy.

To feed his army, Sun Yat Sen had recourse to taxes,

not only on vice and gambling, but on legal business. Only a short time before my arrival, Dr. Sun had protested vigorously that duties on imports coming into Canton were being collected by representatives of the Peiping Government under protection of the foreign governments so that the revenue might be used to pay off foreign debts.

Despite desperate shifts to finance his operations, Dr. Sun Yat Sen, known in China by the more familiar title of Sun Wen—Father of the Chinese republic, was a great idealist who saw clearly that China's salvation lay in working out her own economic destiny without the interference of the Western powers, which have always used China as a medium of exploitation and as a dumping ground for the surplus manufactures of their own faulty economic system.

I was driven out to the great Chinese beautiful home by the Mayor, in the very car which had frightened me on the Bund the previous day. Dr. Sun received me most cordially. His fine, expressive eyes flashed as he explained why he favoured repudiation of the treaties which foreign countries had forced upon China and whereby they maintain an "Open door" for their products, yet keep a tariff-barrier against Chinese products.

"Despite the idealism of President Wilson and other Americans, and despite the traditional friendship between China and the United States, the class that rules the United States to-day is no friend of China," he said. "And England and the other Western powers, except Russia, are little or no better. Confucius said: 'Rotten wood cannot be carved. Walls made of dirt and mud cannot be plastered.'"

Dr. Sun expressed an intense interest in the Bahá'í economic plan with its advocacy of "no idle rich and no idle poor"—education and opportunity for all, its principles of unity and world peace, and gave me the assurance I desired that Bahá'í workers would be free to lecture and distribute their literature in Canton and the territory under his control.

As a result of his interest I was invited to meet seven

influential Chinese friends in order to explain in further detail the Bahá'í economics at an elaborate dinner given in my honour the following night. Over shark fins, roast duck and twenty or more dishes, followed by bird's-nest "soup"—which I had never eaten before and which did *not* include chop suey and chow mein, I spoke of the great change that is taking place in the world of politics, of the quaking economic structure and the value of world solidarity in the building of a new and more human world for bewildered human beings to live in.

CHAPTER XXX

MANCHUKUO

IT was forty degrees below zero one afternoon in Mukden, and the bar of the only hotel worthy of that name was seething with newspaper correspondents sent there, at considerable expense, by powerful daily newspapers and press associations to keep their readers informed of the latest developments of the Japanese invasion of Manchuria. At certain hours they gathered around the dignified Japanese major who gave out the current developments; then they hurled out cables to the waiting world full of lurid and colourful detail.

One report that I distinctly remember was that armoured tanks were rolling through the streets of Mukden blowing up the Chinese section on their way to Chinchow to obliterate the last Chinaman.

I was seated at a table with Mr. Steele, president of the Peking (now Peiping) Manchurian Railway—a tall, rugged Scotsman with a splendid sense of humour, who chuckled at these vivid “eye-witness” stories, which the unabashed newspapermen themselves recited to us. I had spent a week in this ancient capital of the Manchus, introducing Bahá’í literature into some colleges and rambling about the city. That very day I motored through every part of the Japanese concession, which is the property of the South Manchurian Railway; the business quarter; the walled city of the imperial palace and the Chinese Government office, I had travelled by rickshaw through the crowded Chinese section itself, without a sign of any regiments or armament, except two lonely tanks returning from Chinchow for repairs. They were gliding along quietly and inconspicuously around the large and well-laid-out park that faces the

hotel, where presumably the news-hounds had spotted them!

In fact, the only thing resembling an army that I had seen, was the battalion of rickshaw pullers and drivers of Peiping carts and carriages, who swarmed about me the moment I set foot out of the hotel and the regiments of beggars and pedlars who—in spite of the intense cold—besieged us. For the last three days I had been touring the city, without witnessing the slightest violence in the snow-covered, frigid streets. I had visited without any visible sign of hostility the crowded shops and bargained over curious exquisite little souvenirs of ivory, teakwood, pottery and other long forgotten materials—a few rare and ingenious. I had gone through the principal Japanese and Chinese mission schools, including North-Eastern University and Mukden Medical College, a Presbyterian mission institution which has contributed notably to the conquest of bubonic plague.

Now, thawing out in the warmth of the bar-café, I remarked:

“Mr. Steele, I feel chagrined to have missed to-day’s excitement after spending a week in Mukden.”

“The best place for real war atmosphere is right here in this hotel.” He smiled. I looked about the room. A well-known journalist, a spotless patch over his eye, was enjoying a game of billiards a few feet away, and, seated at several small tables, were reporters drinking and chatting with European residents and one or two Japanese officials.

Eventually the stifling fumes of the bar grew a bit too thick so, after accepting Mr. Steele’s invitation to a dinner dance and cabaret at a Russian restaurant that evening, I betook myself to the pleasant drawing-room on the second floor, where I ensconced myself comfortably by a window. There I considered the much mooted question whether to travel by train through the fighting zone near Chinchow or to sail from Dairen to Taku, the port of Tientsin.

I was deep in thought when the journalist came up and asked if he might sit down.

"Certainly, the room does not belong to me," I replied.

He laughed, and a conversation began. The subject was women!

It lasted from one-thirty until eight-thirty in the evening. He completely disapproved of my taking the train across the Chinese boundary to Tientsin.

"If you do that, you will simply be putting your Government 'on the spot' at a dangerous time. Only a few days ago a missionary was seized by Chinese bandits and held for thirty thousand dollars ransom."

"I don't think any missionary is worth that much!" I exclaimed. "Anyway, I am not a missionary, and with Faith as my protector, why should I worry about Chinese bandits?"

"But you've never encountered Chinese bandits," insisted the journalist.

"I've lived in Chicago and other American cities where there are 'regular' bandits, without encountering any, so why fear them in Manchuria?"

"What do you think of the modern flapper?" the journalist suddenly changed the subject.

"The flapper, a now antiquated term, and her male counterpart, are the only hope we have of saving a collapsing civilization," I replied. "The old gentlemen of our world are rapidly becoming uncomfortably aware that their seats are being snatched from under them, besides they cannot live forever. 'World peace, world unity,' is the slogan now by which youth will conquer later when everything else fails."

"And you think the modern young woman will take a leading part in this movement?"

"Absolutely!" I answered. "She is no longer the plaything she was two generations ago. Ibsen who was a great politician realized that when men reached a certain height in their careers they became dizzy and failed. This he traced to girls who were toys of their fathers and later the playthings of their husbands. He discovered that these mothers exercised a powerful influence over boys during the most impressionable years, therefore the only solution lay in the education

of the gentler sex. Hence *The Doll's House* which caused such a reaction that to-day every girl in these Northern countries not only attends the university, but has a profession which gives her independence as well as understanding of the psychological necessity for the development of her sons. Ibsen brilliantly dramatized the position of women: 'Your "Flapper" is out of her cage, no longer beating her little wings against the bars. She has emerged a full-grown woman, perhaps a bit excited over the new freedom, but no longer a doll in a doll's house.'

With increasing interest, this discussion fairly leaped from subject to subject. I was tremendously interested in his view-points. The journalist talks as fast as a machine-gun spatters bullets and I am not exactly tongue-tied myself.

We talked about the Manchurian situation and the unrest felt throughout the world.

"Conditions could not be much worse," I said, "unless we deliberately school ourselves to the idea of accepting poverty and corruption. What is the matter with people that they do not turn the dial and tune in on faith, courage, wisdom and love, instead of permitting their hearts to become filled with doubt, ignorance, prejudice and fear? How long will human beings consent to this outrage against all moral and spiritual advancement and blindly support leaders who show no interest in humanity? Books are being written by the thousands, lecturers are speaking everywhere on better social conditions, but what have they to offer? What is the matter with the citizens of the world, that they calmly take the bitter pill? It is possible they actually like it, believe they have to stand for the situation which brings about such conditions, or can it be possible they do not care. Occasionally leaders arise who are sufficiently human and with enough vision to lift us out of the doldrums of graft and political intrigue—but the howling complainers are ineffectual and innately dumb, while the clever human assassins go ahead with their deadly work.

"Funny as it may seem to many prominent leaders,

who will laugh too late, a solution for the world's problems can be had for the taking, and any man or woman who repudiates such a programme will eventually learn their own colossal futility. Could things be worse than they are now? Therefore, why not consider seriously a scheme of economics based on a spiritual idea of justice for a change? The great difference between such a plan and the ideas brought forth by men is that the new one is based upon a change of heart, upon honesty, integrity, and interest in human beings and God. Didn't Herbert Spencer say that 'by no political alchemy is it possible to get golden conduct out of leaden instincts'?"

We were still engaged in a lively verbal engagement when Mr. Steele suddenly stood in the doorway with a puzzled expression on his ruddy face. My wrist-watch indicated that it was eight-thirty—an hour and a half after I was supposed to have dined with him. Mr. Steele looked at the table near us, took in the situation and said:

"Any human being that can hold shis journalist rooted to one spot for six hours or longer, with only three silver fizzes, must have something worth while!"

Later I questioned Mr. Steele concerning my railway trip to Tientsin. "Is there any real danger?"

"Is there?" he gasped. "Ten days ago I was returning to business from Tientsin when bandits entered our private car, relieved me of my new fur coat and robbed my guests and the other passengers of all their valuables.

"The chap who held me up was a ragged, nervous, emaciated creature, who really seemed a lot more frightened than I was. He stood about five feet in front of me and his hand shook so that I knew that if he ever pulled the trigger I had a ninety-nine per cent chance of being missed.

"The poor, starved devils," he added, "have nothing else to fall back on for existence than plunder."

"Two days later I was off to Tientsin by *train*. When Mr. Steele saw that I was determined to go by this route, he delayed the train five hours after its scheduled

time for departure so that by the time it reached the stretch of no-man's-land between the Japanese and Chinese outposts, any bandits who might be lying in wait would be frozen out and be forced back to their camp in the hills before the train passed by.

Mr. Steele had given the order to hold the train so as to avert the possibility of accomplices telegraphing to the Chinese bandits. The evening previous, Mr. Steele had entertained me and several of his friends at a Russian restaurant. I had a flair for beef *à la Strogonoff*, my pet Russian dish. I jokingly remarked that I adored Strogonoff even for breakfast. Early the following morning, a waiter came to my room with a three-tiered receptacle containing sufficient Strogonoff and potatoes *sauté* for three. I ate half of it and had the rest wrapped up, feeling that after Chinchow, where we were scheduled to arrive at five that evening, I might be thankful to have food of any kind. Mr. Steele escorted me to the train.

For hours we rolled through flat, unproductive country, blanketed in white. Gradually the train slowed down, then stopped. We had reached the last station in Manchuria and were only a few miles from Chinchow. We were at the border of no-man's-land, the fighting zone around Chinchow, and the Japanese soldiers left the train. From outside rose a terrible roar of human voices and through the growing gloom, I made out the forms of thousands of men, women and children, fighting each other to board the Mukden-bound train puffing on the next track. Burdened and surrounded by baggage of every description, bundles, pots, crates of chickens, dogs and other animals—they clawed and fought each other, trampling the weak even to death in their mad scramble to flee from the devastation of China, the cold and hunger which had been their inheritance.

I kept my face glued to the frost-covered window-pane during the short stretch across no-man's-land. A flat, bleak, snow-covered expanse—the most dangerous part of the journey—the bandit-infested territory—where Mr. Steele had been robbed—the *bête noire* of the

Mukden-Pekin Railway. My "pickles and candy" uneasiness in the region of my solar plexus did not abate until the Chinese soldiers boarded the train on their side of this desolated waste and took up the duties which had been relinquished by the Japanese guards.

Horrible war! Horrible greed! Miserable humanity! With a greater zeal than ever to implant the seed of universal peace and kinship, I continued on to Tientsin, the click of the wheels sounding in my ears like the rhythmic death and terror cries of those poor wretches behind us.

Lao-Tzu said: "The Great Way is very smooth, but the people love the bypaths."

In Nanking, I interviewed Sun Fo, the Prime Minister, just twenty-four hours after his election. He based his hope for a united China on a united world, in which the World Powers would abolish war through international co-operation.

CHAPTER XXXI

BOUND FOR MANDALAY

I HAD watched the flying-fishes play and the quick dawn come thundering out across the bay, and now I watched our ship glide from the Blue Bengal Sea into the shallow waters of the Irrawaddy River to the dock at Rangoon.

Burma, the land of rubies and jade, of rice and teak-wood and oil, of the golden pagoda of Rangoon, and the golden palace of the Kingdom of Ava at Mandalay ! I had selected this part of Indo-China as the first country I should visit of the vast Indian world.

We hugged the north bank of the river to avoid the shifting sandbars on the opposite shore, passing forests and paddy fields, coco-nut groves and the little thatched huts of the Burmans, surrounded by tamarind and mango trees. These gave way to the odoriferous steel tanks of the Burmah Oil Company—British controlled, at Syriam. Then more fields, and presently the far-off flash that proclaims the golden spire-topped Shwe Dragon Pagoda.

A smart young British official, only two years away from Oxford, but his face already a deep tan from the Burmese sun, identified these landmarks. He was just returning from "home"—England—to this country, where he would probably spend a better part of the next thirty years of his life. "There is the spire now," he pointed out, and I saw the shaft, like a jewelled ray of light, leap into the sky. Behind the wharves and lower buildings another golden flame flashed, the "Sule Pagoda," which dominates the centre of the city of Rangoon.

Our steamer was moored to one of a line of busy wharves dotted with Hindu coolies bearing huge back-

bending sacks of rice and paddy into the waiting hold. Despite the pagodas the city looked almost Occidental.

What I had read and heard of the many gods and cults of Hindustani mystified me. Divine sublimity seemed mingled with grossest materialism, flesh-defying asceticism with bestial debauchery, keen intellectualism with stupid superstition. All seemed incomprehensibly mingled. Burma, I had read, is one of the strongholds of that type of the dark and ancient practices which Buddhism has failed to displace. Well, I should soon find out.

A group of charming Burmese Bahá'is who had been advised of my arrival met me at the dock, including the venerable Syed Mustafa Roumie, then eighty-two years of age and the very picture of a saint with his patriarchal white beard and his angelic countenance.

A few years later, when I returned to Rangoon, the same beatific-appearing gentleman was on hand to meet me again, but this time he had a new bride—a lovely and wealthy widow of sixty-five summers.

Every Western traveller who visits Burma and India should have a guru or wise man to act as guide and interpreter, says Lowell Thomas. Mustafa Roumie obligingly assumed this role. In addition, the proprietor of Minto Mansions, my hotel, an Armenian Christian, immediately professed an avid interest in Bahá'i affairs and put his motor-car at my disposal.

Early the next morning we made our way through the growing throng that was headed for the Golden Pagoda. The yellow robes of the Punghis much in evidence, the Buddhist monks were already making their daily round, holding out the begging bowls into which all good Buddhists drop offerings.

Although Rangoon is counted a Buddhist city, Hindus, as a matter of fact, outnumber the Buddhists 125,000 to 112,000 and 62,000 Moslems. Besides the hundreds of pagodas, big and little, there are temples, mosques, churches, and even three or four synagogues. On the streets one sees Hindoo coolies in breech cloths and turbans, and Hindu money-lenders, Tamils and Singalese, Chinese merchants in flapping jackets and pyjamas,

Bengalis in calico jackets and trousers, odd-looking Kling women, tall uniformed Sikhs, Europeans in silks and linen.

It was my first view of the Burmese and I was surprised to find them so different a race from the Indian. I could well understand the eagerness of Kipling's soldier to hasten back to Mandalay and the Burma girl awaiting. For, except the classic little Tamils you see in Southern India, Singapore and Borneo, I have never seen such graceful figures and such velvety complexions. They wore glistening black hair high, twisted flat around a large comb on the top of the head and ornamented with white jasmine flowers, a white muslin jacket, and what appears to be a circular piece of bright-coloured silk wrapped around the body ankle-length and known as sarong. One simply has to have a figure to wear anything as simple as that! And what technique it must take to keep it from dropping off when one is in a hurry!

It is surprising to notice the freedom in dress, manners and activities of the women in Burma. Smiling, gentle-voiced, they take their places everywhere, on the streets, and sit cross-legged on mats before the tiny booths which line the teak-roofed stairway leading to the Shwe Dragon Pagoda.

In stockinged feet we mounted the stairway and joined the hundreds of devotees on the brick platform, raised by terraces one hundred and sixty-eight feet from the street level, where hundreds of brightly-clad figures were already at their prayers. Looking upward to the jewel-encrusted umbrella which surmounts the pagoda at a height of three hundred and sixty-eight feet, this amazing structure has the appearance of a gigantic, intricately carved and fretted piece of jewellery. Every square inch of the surface is covered with gold leaf, continuously renewed by public contributions, and the more delicately wrought spires and eaves look as though they were exquisite golden tapestries or lace of gold. The gold and silver bells suspended around the umbrella tinkle in the warm breeze.

Lining the edge of the huge platform are hundreds of

temples and shrines erected by wealthy Buddhists and each—weathered carved teak, coloured glass mosaic, gold or silver—a perfect work of art. Worshippers squat in little groups on the brick platform, gazing at the jewelled spire, or laying offerings of silk, rice, flowers and fruit in the lap of the image of Buddha in some shrine. In separate groups yellow-robed monks hover about. A pilgrim from Upper Burma moves slowly around the platform, measuring his length from outstretched toe to outstretched finger-tip in the dust.

Buddha, like Christ and Muhammad and other great prophets, wished no personal worship of himself.

"They are not supposed to worship the images or even to pray to Buddha," I was informed, "but simply to meditate here on his teachings, to renew their vows and repent of their sins. The relic chamber below contains the four hairs which Gautama gave two Burmese merchants at Gaya twenty-five hundred years ago. So it is considered a particularly holy place."

Burma, together with Ceylon and Siam, remains one of the few countries where Gautama is still regarded as a great teacher of a way of life—the middle path—comprehensible to all people. To the great majority of Buddhists, Gautama has become almost a god.

As I watched the fat merchant and his wife kneel in prayer before the Buddha or the gold or silver shrine he has built, I wondered what Siddhatha Gautama would think could be return to this worldly splendour erected in his name—he who taught renunciation of the three cravings which bring sorrow; gratification of the senses, desire for personal immortality and wealth. The Golden Pagoda, with its glowing candles and tinkling bells, and its girdle of shrines, stands as a bejewelled monument to worldly wealth, the pleasure of the senses, and personal immortality, not only of Gautama, but of those whose worldly prosperity enables them to erect their individual shrines.

I have come from a country where millions are spent to erect churches and cathedrals to Him who drove the money-changers out of the temple and preached a life of poverty. So who am I to criticize these people for

raising towers of gold to him who gave up wealth to take the begging bowl and who taught his path to serenity under a Bo tree. After all, the Burmese, who are Orientals, have followed the eightfold path of Gautama more closely than we Westerners have followed the path laid out by Jesus, who was an Oriental.

CHAPTER XXXII

VILLAGE OF KUNJUNGONE

ACCOMPANIED by Mustafa Roumie, who is the editor of the Burma Bahá'i magazine, I visited the first Bahá'i community, in the jungle of Kunjungone, forty miles up the Irrawaddy, then twenty-three miles inland.

A few mornings later, laden with a folding camp-bed, mosquito netting, dishes and cutlery, we boarded the river-boat. It turned out to be a floating department store and a cargo craft, which continuously plied up and down the Irrawaddy for about a thousand miles, anchoring at native villages in the most primitive manner. Frequently where the river is low the natives dive into the mucky water a few feet from the shore, pull the mooring rope after them and fasten it to any stick or piece of wood found strewn along the shore and driven into the sand with one of Nature's hammers, a rock. Travel on the river-boat is the only way to get acquainted with the real Burma. In addition, it is one of the most fascinating trips in the world. The stops are long enough to enable one to stroll through the villages while the natives clamber aboard to the upper deck and make the rounds of the dozen narrow pigeon-holed stalls, where is displayed everything from fish to yard goods which look suspiciously as though they had been made in Manchester.

It must not for a moment be thought that this primitive, though fascinating for some, method of travel is the only means of navigating the Irrawaddy from Rangoon to Bhamo, some 1275 miles distant. The Irrawaddy Flotilla Company operates a fleet of modern steamers during the navigable season from November 1st

to about the middle of May. These steamers carry the mail but make few stops. Accommodations and food are excellent, except for the most fastidious. World travellers who do not include an excursion up the Irrawaddy in their itinerary, especially the upper defiles, to my mind miss the most magnificent scenery of the Far East.

When we arrived at Twente a few hours later, we were taken ashore in a flat-bottomed row-boat to the muddy bank, where we found a little French Citroën car awaiting us, Mustafa Roumie having arranged for this convenience from Rangoon.

We started off through the magnificent jungle over a rough, narrow road, with the driver apparently trying to hit every hole. We had gone about ten miles when my friend and guide, evidently quite proud of the automobile, asked whether I had a motor at home.

"Yes," I replied. "Western women drive their own cars."

Mustafa Roumie was so proud that his Western protégée could manage a car that he told it to the driver, who immediately stopped, jumped out and said, with a profuse bow:

"Please, madam, will you take my seat."

Tired as I was, I climbed in behind the wheel, the driver piled in beside Mustafa Roumie and, to the accompaniment of surprised comments on the ability of any woman to operate machinery, I started off over a rough jungle road at the rate of about thirty-five miles an hour, although it seemed at least seventy. I learned later that poor Mustafa Roumie nearly bounced out of the back seat, only managing to hold himself in by dint of clutching desperately to the front seat. The sun was just setting behind the tops of the majestic trees when we drove into a clearing and saw, forming a huge horse-shoe of welcome, about six hundred men, women and children in gala attire. Although amazed to see me at the wheel, they saluted me with one voice, again and again, then waited for me to return the greeting.

With the last rays of the sun lending a rose tint, the scene was unforgettable. This was Bahá'í community idyllic, the costumes of my welcomers similar to those I had admired in Rangoon. And from the jasmine, roses and other blossoms wound in the hair of the women and girls rose an exotic fragrance. All wore fine white cotton jackets, vari-coloured sarongs and red basouls (or skirts). The women's hair was piled high, gold bangles glittered in their ears and about their wrists. The men wore white turbans, the little girls the strange, pointed headdress seen in Siam and Cambodia. I was escorted to the campong to a low, one-storied building, roofed with palm and bamboo fronds, to the feast that was in readiness for me. To my surprise I learned that I was the first Occidental woman to visit Kunjungone, the first white woman that many of them had ever seen. Women cried and kissed my hand and I kissed their velvety skin. One embraced me and said :

"This seems like a dream to us, for we have been praying for a Western sister to visit us for years and you are the first. We are so happy, but feel it must be a dream."

In my honour, three seats, resembling Morris chairs and a table, had been placed in one end of the long room. The seats were for Mustafa Roumie, a member of the Spiritual Assembly, and myself. The rest squatted on the matted floor, facing me and waiting for me to speak. Then about one hundred girls who had been selected for their voices, chanted prayers, the men joining in at the proper time, and all joining the choruses. They had soft voices, sweet and melodious.

After bowls of food had been set before me, they crowded around, not rudely, but with love and devotion beaming on their brown faces. For had I not come to them from Haifa and from Shoghi Effendi, the grandson of their beloved Abdu'l Bahá?

Darkness had fallen upon the jungle village, and an acetylene lamp which had been rigged up in the hall was lit. Almost immediately thousands of insects, the size of June bugs, appeared from nowhere and began

biting me with quick nips. I was gravely informed that the insects are born when the lights are lit and dissolve with the dark. Finally, they became such a nuisance that the lamps were removed to the garden, whence came the continued din of thousands of bugs buzzing round the lamps in a thick cloud in the dusk. I could barely see the eager faces and sparkling eyes of the children.

Bamboo screens were placed at one end of the long hall, my folding-bed mosquito-proof was set up, several tables were brought in together with standing mirrors and a lacquer box on an embroidered scarf. To my complete astonishment, when the lamps were dimmed the bugs disappeared, and peace settled over the little Bahá'i campong.

In Burma every one rises with the sun, and at about six-thirty the next morning, men and women commenced pouring into the campong, carrying dishes of rice, fruit, etc. Their hair was decorated with fresh flowers and, as the night before, they wore festive garments. With a mixture of reverence and curiosity, they began peeping about to see if I was ready to appear. I hurried into my clothes for a breakfast of eggs and rice. By this time four hundred had crowded into the campong.

All too soon the day passed and it was time to leave. After speeches of farewell, I started for our Citroën, but before I could climb in, the women pressed about me with their parting tears and embraces, and some of the men to touch my dress.

"Soon you will be gone, and we have hardly realized you have come," said one.

I was too tired to take the wheel, but sat behind with Mustafa Roumie. The driver kept turning around every mile or so to look at me. Finally he mustered up enough courage to ask:

"What God do you worship, Madam?"

I told him that there was only one God.

"And do you think Buddha will punish me if I become a Bahá'i?" he asked.

Out of my elementary study of the Bahá'i teachings,

I attempted to explain that Gautama was not only one of the great world teachers, like Moses, Jesus, Muhammad and Zoroaster, but that his spirit and theirs were essentially the same, each having brought the message, most suitable to the time of his appearance. The lamps I said were different, but the light the same. Mustafa Roumie assured the driver that a Buddhist could become a Bahá'í without forsaking the essential teachings of Gautama.

"The next time I come to Burma I expect you will be a fine Bahá'í," I said, as we parted. When I offered him a tip he smiled all over but refused it, declaring he had already been adequately paid.

Later, at Mamyó, near Mandalay, Sir Harcourt Butler, the British Governor of Burma, expressed his keen interest in the Bahá'í village.

"On my last journey into the interior," said Sir Harcourt, "I noted the decided difference in the mode of living of the members of the Bahá'í colony and the inhabitants of neighbouring villages, where drunkenness, vice and murder are common, where the women wear rags and the children run about almost nude, where the men are gamblers and cut-throats and the women suffer great hardship.

"At Kunjungone I found a community where men worked the paddy fields, where there is a school and other evidence of industrial development and thrift. Tell me something about this small jungle community."

I told him the story as Mustafa Roumie had told it to me. A native of Bengal, Mustafa Roumie had met Abdu'l Bahá, become a Bahá'í and was sent to Burma to teach. A friend of Mustafa Roumie, who lived in the jungle village Kunjungone, invited me for a visit. Soon the friend accepted the Bahá'í faith and asked Mustafa Roumie to teach his friends in turn. In short, several hundred Moslems and Buddhists through the study of Bahá'u'lláh's teaching had found reconciliation and unity in God's message for this age.

In the meantime, the Buddhist priests and the Muhammadan mullah became alarmed at the inroads of

Mustafa Roumie and advised the surrounding communities to have nothing to do with his religion and with the people whom he had turned into infidels, enemies of Buddha and Muhammad. This, however, only aroused the curiosity of the neighbours, who began investigating for themselves.

Their numbers grew so rapidly that mullah and priest finally decided to take drastic measures. They positively forbade Muhammadan or Buddhist to cross the boundary of the Bahá'i community. But one man, more intelligent than the average, went to the mullah and the priest, demanding that they appear in public with Mustafa Roumie and thrash the matter out before them. This they promised to do, but, for reasons best known to themselves, postponed the encounter again and again until the people threatened that they would join the Bahá'is unless the promised discussion took place.

One evening at twilight a group of men went to the priest and the mullah, and persuaded the two to accompany them to Bahá'i village, where they knew Mustafa Roumie would be holding forth at the evening assembly. They arrived after darkness had fallen, tiptoed up the five steps and stood on the veranda listening to Mustafa Roumie chant the evening prayer. The beauty of the prayer held them enchanted.

They turned to the natives and said :

"We can't do anything to this man. He is sincere, and undoubtedly an inspired teacher of religion."

After that there was no opposition, the village flourished, and by 1933 it had approximately one thousand one hundred inhabitants.

At Soombyangore I wondered why all the Burmese men rose, offering their seats, the moment I appeared on deck. And I was even more astonished when one of them asked me what my religion was.

It seems that someone had preceded me explaining that "a very great missionary" was on board. To most Orientals, the Christian missionary is anathema, and they were considering means of gracefully retiring when they caught their first glimpse of the missionary

coming toward them, dressed in *organdie à la mode*, carrying a jade green parasol. They were struck dumb they told me later. Only one who has met a "professional" missionary in so-called "heathen" countries will understand why.

CHAPTER XXXIII

INDIA IN RETROSPECT

WHEN I arrived at Calcutta on the S.S. *Angora*, the proprietor of the Great Eastern Hotel almost fell over himself to get me comfortably settled and gave me the best room in the hotel at an unbelievably low rate.

He had read about my lectures and travels in the papers weeks before, he explained. As a matter of fact, my article in the Rangoon paper had been picked up and published throughout India. They seem to be chronically more eager for news than the New York, Chicago or London sheets.

The result of my sudden newspaper fame precipitated my first public address in India. It was Sunday, and I dropped into a lecture where I supposed I should be unknown. Then, to my consternation, I was called to the platform.

There were at least four hundred present. To my surprise, I noted the audience began to perk up and lean forward in their seats as I explained the World Commonwealth of the future.

During dinner on board the S.S. *Angora* I had been told by a noted scholar that, although millions of Hindus still worship Kali (the black), sacrificing the blood of goats to her, a breath of new religious understanding is sweeping millions of others, that such leaders as Rabin-dranath Tagore are preaching the worship of God in spiritual ways to all, regardless of caste, and that the Arya Samaj have abolished castes and seek salvation through effort. In their teachings there is a tendency toward the unity stressed by Bahá'u'lláh, who teaches that life is a stream of activity and that those who are inactive become driftwood along the shore. Yet I

was not prepared for the enthusiasm that my address aroused. When I had finished, requests for literature came from all sides and so many crowded around the platform that I remained another half-hour answering questions.

I was escorted to my hotel by a dozen youths who had followed me from the hall, and they refused to leave until I had gone to my room and returned with literature.

India is alive with a spirit of revolt against that form of Hinduism which has encrusted with blood sacrifice, fanaticism, asceticism and idolatry the intellectually beautiful, though pessimistic doctrine of denial of the world of senses. The interpretation of ancient Upanishads by the swamis and gurus teaches that desire leads to rebirth and rebirth of suffering, and that therefore the only way to stop the eternal wheel of pain is to abolish desire. This is a sad and limited construing of desire, the active principle of creation. The tragedy of such a doctrine is understandable to an Occidental only after he has seen the misery with which the average Hindu's life is unfolded. The interpreters of Krishna in India have distorted the great principles of life into a fantastic worship of the cow and a refusal to kill even vermin, and have allowed superstition to destroy ethical impulses and forged a philosophy of reincarnation into the cruel caste system.

I had read descriptions of the worship of Kali. But not until I had visited her temple and heard the beat of drums and the wild cries of her name as the priest's cutlass severed the head of the sacrificial goat and the blood spurted forth and priests and worshippers flung themselves on the floor, did I fully realize its fanaticism. Kali herself is black and, with tongue thrust out between her teeth, stands upon the body of her husband and stretches out her four arms. In one hand she holds a knife, in the second the bleeding head of a giant, in the third, blood. The fourth is empty.

When the Aryan tribe first came over the Hindu Kush mountains, they brought with them the same joy of life as the ancient Greeks. Under the influence of Brahm

they supplanted their many gods by the One, Single, Supreme, and rose to a high state of spiritual and intellectual development.

What play of forces caused the Brahmans to adopt the many thousand gods and goddesses of the dark races which they conquered? And did they fasten the caste system upon them to prevent forever their own race from being swallowed up through miscegenation by the conquered?

India is a land of innumerable creeds and cults. Of its total population of 353,000,000 there are approximately 217,000,000 Hindus; 69,000,000 Moslems; 11,500,000 Buddhists (most of them in Burma); 5,000,000 Christians; 3,250,000 Sikhs and 10,000,000 Animists. In addition, there are Jains and Parsees, with a sprinkling of Jews and Theosophists. The Hindus are divided into hundreds of sects, from the Samaji to the worshippers of Kali.

The Sikhs from the Punjab, who are the tallest of the Hindus and are frequently found wearing scarlet uniforms of the Viceroy's guards or that of the trusted police of such places as Singapore, Hong Kong and Shanghai, are followers of Nanak, a fifteenth-century reformer who like the Christian Martin Luther, revolted against the excesses of priests. He taught that there is only one God and that all had the right to seek God regardless of caste, and he denounced vestments, ostentatious prayer, penance, pilgrimage and other such priestly excrescences. In 1606 Guru Har Govind, Nanak's successor, established cavalry and infantry, and encouraged his followers to eat flesh to improve their physiques. The tenth and last Guru, Govind Rai, reorganized the Sikhs into a military organization, armed them with sword and dagger, and permitted warriors to use meat and liquor but prohibited tobacco and narcotics.

The Sikhs later conquered Kashmir and Peshawar, subdued the hill states and set up a hereditary monarchy; and they became bitterly anti-Moslem. They were finally defeated by the British toward the middle of the nineteenth century. This led to the British possession of the Punjab.

Jainism is the system of ethical culture first taught by Mahavira Vardhamana, the son of a chieftain born near modern Besark, at about the same time as Gautama. Like Buddhism, Jainism was a revolt against Brahmanism. Jainists teach that deliverance from rebirth may be won by distinction between the spiritual and the material, by absolute faith in the Master and the sacred texts, by practice of virtue or strict observance of the five vows taken by Jainist monks; not to kill, not to lie, not to steal, not to indulge in sexual pleasures, and to renounce all attachments. So fearful is a Jain of taking life that he will remove vermin rather than kill it, and breathe gently lest he kill some insect. I wonder what would happen if a Jain looked through a microscope and realized the animalcules that exist in every bit of food, every drop of water and every breath of air! Often a Jain monk will wear a cloth over the lower part of his face through which he breathes. The Jains also appear to be the original nudists, going without clothing whenever feasible. Fortunately for the paymen, many of whom are wealthy merchants, they are able to take vows without binding themselves to follow completely this rigorous code.

Because of the subtlety of its teachings, Jainism is confined to a relatively small intellectual class of somewhat more than a million believers.

The Badri Dad Temple, with its conical tower rising from a cluster of lesser towers, is one of the most ornate temples of this "city of palaces," and the centre of the Jain sect. The facing of the stone walls is cut so delicately as to resemble filigree or lace.

The horror of the Black Hole of Calcutta is too well known to warrant other than a cursory mention—such men as Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive cannot be forgotten.

I soon discovered that the "best people" of Calcutta had gone to the "hills," in reality into the immense mountains of the Himalayas. Darjeeling and Shillong in Assam are the hill stations for Calcutta. I received from an old friend an invitation to join her at her home in Darjeeling, at the base of Mount Everest. My itinerary

allowed me only two weeks to visit Benares, Agra, Delhi, Lahore, and finally Bombay. The heat was beastly, so I yielded to the temptation of slipping away from my self-imposed path, to cool off on the roof of the world.

So far I had got along very well with my Hindustani, hiring a guide only when the occasion demanded. But on leaving the hotel I was importuned by such a determined and energetic "bearer," I decided to take him with me—or myself with him.

Although most guides annoy me—oft-times proving more of a hindrance than a help—I allowed him to take charge of the luggage and succumbed to his insistent request to buy extra bedding for the journey. Train time came, and no bearer. I entered my compartment, looked around, made a lightning once-over of the train to make certain he had not gotten into the wrong car and hurriedly hopped off. At the same moment I beheld my bearer dashing down the platform, followed by three husky porters bearing my luggage. But the train was already moving and there was no chance of getting all the luggage on board.

What I said to the boy had better not be repeated here. It was the first time in my life that I had ever missed a train, and it took a bearer to ruin my record. He was fired on the spot. His explanation, given with profuse bows and apologies, was that he had shopped all over the bazaar in order to save me two annas (about two-pence) on a purchase of pillow-cases.

It was the season for the hill stations. The trains had been booked solid days ahead by British and other Europeans escaping from the terrific heat. Unable to secure a reservation, Darjeeling had to wait another year.

Despite their small numbers the Europeans have succeeded in impressing the superficial aspect of their amenities on the city to a remarkable degree. Firpo's Restaurant I found as smart as the "Biltmore" in New York, or the "Congress" in Chicago. Under Italian management and with a French cuisine, a European orchestra blazed forth the latest American jazz music for

cocktail parties and tea dansants, where Europeans, Hindus and Parsees sip liqueurs and dry martinis, the women in magnificent saris, gold and silver-heeled sandals and with their faces made up with an artistry that puts to the blush the casual impressionistic dab of rouge and lipstick of the average Western woman.

Here and at a restaurant, the Great Eastern Hotel, which was reminiscent of the Café de Paris, I danced and discussed the peculiar ways, religious and otherwise, of our brothers and sisters of India.

One evening I was invited by a Parsee lady to attend a performance of one of the dramas written about Siva. We left my hotel together.

"Mayfair Theatre," she said to the chauffeur.

Presently the driver stopped and we stepped out.

"This is not the Mayfair Theatre!" the lady exclaimed, reading the announcement of an English movie.

The doorman approached.

"Can I do something for you, Madam?"

"We wish to go to the Mayfair Theatre."

"But you wouldn't want to go there—that's a native theatre in the native quarter."

"That's precisely where we want to go," I retorted.

"Do you think I've come to India to see English plays—there are plenty where I come from."

As I turned to enter the car I noticed one of the Viceregal secretaries walking up the steps, thorough disgust at the sight of my companion registered on his superior countenance.

An interesting experience the year following captures my imagination. *En route* to Mysore, on one of my visits to India, I suddenly felt an urge as the train pulled into the junction station, to motor out to the palace of one of India's most powerful potentates. When I arrived at the palace, I explained to the secretary my desire for an interview. I was advised after a brief wait that the "mighty one" would not see me and was not interested in the "World Order of Bahá'u'lláh."

I had unpacked on the train and dressed with great care for the interview, wearing several ounces of jade purchased in Canton, China, and the last word in

French parasols. So I took myself into his beautiful garden and began to pick roses before the royal one's balcony. His Mightiness, as I suspected, was standing at the window to watch the departure of another frustrated nuisance. Instead, he saw a worldly-looking creature despoiling his choice bloom. A hurried investigation proved to him that the poacher was none other than she who had desired an audience. A few minutes later the secretary came dashing out and hurried me to the luxurious apartments overhanging the garden. For a moment the potentate stared, then he politely offered me a sumptuous chair and with a smile that displayed his flashing white teeth, observed :

"So you are a missionary ! How extraordinary ! You do not look in the least like a missionary."

Horrified I came back : "Your Highness, would you be so kind as to give me your definition of a missionary and your idea of what one should look like ?"

With a roar of humorous laughter he replied :

"It is not what they should look like, but what they do look like."

Then seriously : "Now, Madam, just what is there about this movement of which my secretary has been telling me, that could hold your attention ? I am not joking in the least, because anything religious that would attract a lady like yourself must be a very practical and sensible one."

Briefly I told him that anything with a solution for world peace and restored stability was worthy of consideration, adding :

"I have found something that wipes out from the hearts of human beings 'prejudice,' which is based on nothing more than difference in colour of skin, religious observances, geographical customs and habits. I have found during this world journey the Bahá'í plan has become rooted the world over without the aid of propaganda, neither carried on by paid missionaries and clergy, nor by any other means than the desire of those who feel within their hearts the urge to spread this splendid and noble teaching.

Furthermore, your Highness, Bahá'í is not a religion

in the sense in which the word is usually understood. It represents in its all-embracing scope an entirely New World Order of government, upon which a jumbled world can build a universal or international economic commonwealth with the spiritual impulse as its cornerstone."

He invited me to remain for luncheon, later sending me to the station in a Rolls Royce, and asking me to visit him again. In the meantime, he asked that I send him literature on this interesting new teaching.

Elated at having interested the most important native ruler of India, I arrived at Bangalore to offer spiritual pearls to the Maharajah of Mysore.

The Prime Minister proved to be a charming Persian, both familiar and sympathetic with the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. The first people I met through him were Countess Skipwith, and her husband, Colonel Skipwith.

The Countess was a fascinating blonde, artistically draped, preferring the comfort and grace of native saris to European clothes in this enervating climate. We were soon chatting on the subjects closest to our hearts, and to my question she replied :

"After a study of the religions of the world I have found in the teachings of Muhammad, the greatest example of living the life. I have found nothing anywhere more beautiful! I have adopted them as my standard."

Both she and Colonel Skipwith were deeply impressed by my account of wholesale martyrdoms of the heroic Bahá'í "dawnbreakers," the Colonel to such an extent that he said :

"I am writing a book. What you have told me about this amazing and much-needed New World Order has changed the entire trend of the chapter on which I am working, giving it a new meaning, crystallizing the vague ideas I have been groping for!"

The following morning I was invited by the Prime Minister to attend a party under a huge striped canopy. The canopy, the garb of some of the guests, the little pearl-inlaid tables covered with exquisite embroidered

linen, the sweets and cone-shaped, cream-filled pastries, and the plaintive sound of hidden stringed instruments gave the occasion an altogether Arabian Nights atmosphere.

I was conversing with some English and Zoroastrian ladies when a roar that sounded like an aeroplane propeller suddenly drowned out all other sounds. To our horror, a huge crow, measuring fully three feet from wing tip to wing tip, zoomed into the tent, snatched a cream roll off our table and zoomed out again. Had the great roc that carried Sinbad to the Valley of Diamonds appeared I do not believe we could have been more frightened. Tables were overturned, dozens of teacups crashed, and feminine screams pierced the air.

The next day I was in Mysore and, although it was the day of the great annual fête, when the sacred elephant is paraded through the city, the Maharajah found time to receive me.

Forty-five years of age, small, immaculately clothed in long, white coat and neatly bound turban, he proved to be a man of deep spirituality, fundamentally thoughtful, much of his life having been spent in search of some method of improving the status of his people.

We discussed for a while the unification of India.

"Do you not agree," I asked, "that the only solution for the evils of a non-progressive world lies in advancement through education?"

"Undoubtedly," he replied. "But what form of education?"

I told him there was a teaching that included a definite educational programme, an economic scheme and a plan for international political co-operation, with a religion so broad that it included the basic teachings of all other religions.

"Is there such a movement?" he eagerly asked.

In reply I handed him a book.

"I am glad to know that there is a movement effectually operating that will eventually bring about world peace and understanding," he said. "Such a movement cannot fail to win in the end!"

Upon leaving, I asked for his autographed photograph, which he promised to send me.

Two days later, I was sitting in the lounge of the hotel in Bangalore, when a caller was announced, who had travelled by train all night in order to deliver the promised photograph into my own hands. The picture had been beautifully framed in pierced silver, ornamented at the top with a solid gold eagle backed with rosewood.

CHAPTER XXXIV

MOGUL AND SIKH

I ARRIVED at Delhi during the debate on the salt tax in the Indian legislature. Mahatma Ghandi had recently appealed to the Indian people to make their own salt by drying sea water rather than submit to the tax, and the air was thick with anti-British feeling.

In spite of the heat, I decided to visit the legislature. Fortunately, I ran into Arthur Moore, who was covering the session for the *Bombay Statesman*, of which he was then assistant editor. I had met him in Calcutta and discovered that he was a Bahá'í. He secured a pass for me to the visitors' gallery and I listened to the white-robed, dark-skinned legislators in this hall of British government make an issue of the trifling tax in their struggle for independence.

Yet, after all, it is over such trifles that history is made. Looking down upon these Hindu and Hindu and Moslem legislators I wondered at the strange course of events that had placed the regulation of their affairs in the hands of a distant island people of a Western race, and speculated upon what would happen should they gain their independence.

Weeks later, as I was having tiffin with a native prince, he remarked :

"Of course, we have sense enough to realize that if Great Britain steps out we will have internal strife and that, in the ensuing period of chaos, Russia or Japan, or possibly China, would step in. If it came to a choice of foreign rule, we should certainly prefer the British."

Capital of British India since 1921 and former capital of the mighty Mogul Empire, Delhi is full of sublime

examples of the Moslem genius for warfare, administration and art. Within the redstone battlements of the Imperial palace of the old Delhi are masterpieces of architecture worthy of the builders of the Taj Mahal. I walked through the spacious Diwan-i-Am, or Hall of Public Advice, with its curved flat roof of Hindu style supported by sixty red sandstone pillars. It was here, in this great silver-roofed audience chamber, that the Grand Mogul had sat upon the magnificent Peacock Throne, which was carried off by the Persian invader, Nadir Shah. The throne derives its name from the two peacocks which stood behind it, their tails expanded in a burst of sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls and other precious stones, so skilfully inlaid as to appear alive. Supported on four feet of gold, the throne stood beneath a golden canopy supported by twelve columns inlaid with pearls valued at six million dollars and braced by bars set with crosses of rubies, emeralds, diamonds and pearls. The entire throne, a part of which now supposedly forms the throne of the Shah at Tihlán, cost some thirty millions of dollars.

Where else can one find the jewel-like flowers and foliage, of green, serpentine, blue lapis lazuli, red and purple porphyry, that adorn the huge arches of the white marble pavilion of the Diwan-i-Khas, or Hall of Private Audience, or where gaze on greater religious majesty, than the Jamma Musjid, or Great Mosque, expresses, with its three domes of white marble, its two tall minarets, its front court, four hundred and fifty feet square, paved with granite inlaid with marble and capable of holding ten thousand worshippers? What tower compares with the fluted sandstone Kuth Minar, three hundred and thirty-eight feet high, which commemorates the victories of the Mogul general Kuth-ud-in, and which ranges in colour from a purple red at the bottom through various shades of red to the vivid dark orange at the top, the whole tied together in a chromatic unity by contrasting bands of dark Arabic script and twenty-sided projecting platforms? Or where find another Kala Musjid (Black Mosque) or Moti Musjid (Pearl Mosque), architectural gems in black and white marble? Or a

mosque of Kud Din, with its Hindu ornamentation and its mysterious iron pillar?

Chandni Chauk, or Silver Street, once esteemed the richest in the world, with its park of grass and double rows of streets in the centre, is now lined with the two-storied shops of jewellers and workers in ivory. The families live above. Here one may see these dark-skinned descendants of the decorators of the Taj and the mosques, with infinite patience and delicate skill, pounding gold and silver into long filaments for cloth, shaping bracelets or ear-rings, polishing and setting precious stones and carving ivory into lovely and fantastic forms to catch the tourists' dollars.

Seven times Delhi has been built and rebuilt by conquerors, who in turn have become the conquered, and four times the Chandni Chauk has run with blood. The British are now building an elaborate new capital, the eighth, with a government house for the Viceroy, a secretariat and a parliament building.

Captured by the Muhammadans in 1193, and for centuries the centre of their dominion in India, Delhi draws to her administrative offices, mosques, and bazaars men from every corner and status of India.

At a reception given by a Hindu member of parliament in the garden of his palatial home, I sat in a beautiful tent, eating French *petit fours* and moulded ice-cream flowers, watching the games and getting an insight into the soul of the more enlightened Hindu. Even those who adhere to their ancient faith in its purest form seem to me to hold exaggerated theories of life and death. One senses a single-track emphasis on reincarnation and *karma*, each life cycles fated to pursue a path as a consequence of the soul's acts in a previous incarnation. The individual can only work within the damning confines of the station into which he was born in the hope of being re-born into a higher caste.

There is a glimmering of recognition of the principle of evolution, which has become distorted.

"Can anyone be so credulous as to imagine that it took dozens or perhaps hundreds of reincarnations to produce one of our greatest men?" I explained to a

young Hindu legislator over a cocktail at Firpos: "And as far as reaching the station of life of one of your Brahmins or, say, one of our Western leaders, it certainly would not take a dozen lives. Education has elevated many in our Western world from what you could consider the lowest caste to the highest. Abraham Lincoln's rise from the time he was born of lowly parents in a log cabin until he was felled by the assassin's bullet, covers an evolution that pseudo-Buddhism or theosophy would require a hundred reincarnations to explain. Yet it occurred in a single lifetime."

"No," he admitted, "as long as we continue our caste system, I am afraid there could never be an Abraham Lincoln to emancipate us."

The caste system and the deadly intolerance of Hindu and Muhammadan will probably make it impossible for India to survive without the strong ruling hand of Great Britain. I recalled Mustafa Roumie's work in the village of Kunjungone and the real brotherhood between Moslem and Buddhist there. Only a new belief in racial amity could permit them to live peacefully together, working out successfully the brilliant civilization to which their past history, their stores of philosophy and the love their hearts displayed in the building of their mosques and temples, entitle them.

Watching the crack Sikh guards, mostly six feet tall or more, swing past in scarlet uniforms and spotless white turbans one March day in Delhi, the inspiration came to me to visit the King of the Sikhs. He is the Maharajah of Patiala, a native Punjab state which extends almost to Simla, only a short journey away. With the optimism which goes hand in hand with enthusiasm, I dashed off a letter requesting an audience, and a few days later received a surprisingly cordial invitation sent by the Maharajah's secretary to present myself a week hence at the Patiala station, whence a motor car would carry me to the guest residence.

Instead of waiting for the scheduled date I boarded a more convenient train out of Delhi, changed to a little suburban-looking train, and arrived at Patiala unexpectedly. However, I was received most graciously at



THE MAHARAJAH OF PATIALA

the Maharajah's residence, and an hour later was deposited, bag and baggage, at the guest house in a huge room which had been reserved for me on the ground floor. I was surprised to find it furnished in the most modern European style and with an adjoining tiled bath-room equipped with the latest Occidental gadgets and as large as a living-room.

At five-thirty came word that dinner would be served at the Maharajah's residence across the garden at seven o'clock, and I spent most of the intervening hour and a half in primping, praying and wondering what I should tell him. As the head of the influential Sikhs, the Maharajah was in a position to advance the Bahá'í teaching powerfully if he were so inclined, therefore I was anxious to make a good impression.

My interest in the Sikhs had not been of recent origin, for all through India I had observed this tallest and most warlike appearing race wearing the brilliant uniforms of the Viceroy's guards or the khaki of troops selected to police the most turbulent of the empire's polyglot areas.

What I had at first conceived in Delhi as a possible audience of a half-hour or so proved a charming week-end which began with a dinner of state. At any rate, twelve of the Maharajah's ministers were seated at the dinner table while I sat at the monarch's right. All my preconceived ideas of the Sikh state were being shattered one by one. The residence, save for details or ornamental *motif* and the wealth of Oriental rugs, was as Occidental as any British gentleman's home in Surrey. The service and even the food were as British as anything in India can be. And the Maharajah himself had been educated in England and spoke with a delightful Oxford accent.

He was a most impressive man, fully six feet two or three in height and dressed in spotless white linen, with his black beard rolled and held in a silk net that was fastened under his turban.

Needless to say he was a gentleman of exceeding charm. He read extensively, was intimately familiar with world politics, enjoyed tiger shooting, had his own

polo field, and owned one of the finest stables of polo ponies in India. An idea of this cosmopolitan point of view may be gained by the fact that among the eight or ten guests at table I noted one of his ministers was a Zoroastrian, another a Muhammadan, a third a Christian, a fourth a Hindu.

During the luncheon the conversation took the usual trend, centring around India, America, and the crazy state of affairs throughout the world.

As we lingered over coffee in the drawing-room later my host inquired as to my chief interest in so much travel.

I explained that one of my chief interests was to do my share in advancing the status of the women throughout the world.

"I have noticed the rapidity with which women are coming to the front," said the Maharajah. "They are forging ahead here in India, where women are really freer than is generally thought."

"But upon what do you base your views of women's equality?" he continued.

"Upon a social, economic and spiritual movement that is making great headway in every country."

"And who is its founder?"

I told him something of the history of the Bahá'í World Order, comparing Bahá'u'lláh with the other supermen—or prophets—who had founded past civilizations. I explained the cyclic movement of civilizations which have been ushered into birth by the appearance of the great spiritual messengers, whose mission is to light the way to a greater consciousness and vision for mankind, for the uncovering of new science and learning, and the progress of mankind.

"But why cannot humanity advance without the appearance of these messengers?" he asked.

"Because man's free will swings alternately to the dark forest of lust and greed, of conquest and the desire for power, and whenever he forgets the power of spirit and degenerates morally and spiritually "One" comes to renew the human remembrance of God. The light which previous prophets brought to humanity has become

dimmed through this forgetfulness, and their teaching of Truth has become lost."

"Do you feel, then, that religious teaching of the past is in darkness?"

"Yes, the structures that previous prophets built have decayed—all of them: Christian, Moslem, the religions of Moses, of Zoroaster."

Before I could complete my thought, the Zoroastrian minister, who had been listening with sympathetic attention when I referred to the decay of other religions, flared up with such vehemence that I almost emptied my coffee cup in my lap.

"Zoroastrianism has not decayed," he exclaimed.

"Doesn't the sacred fire burn night and day in your temples and isn't it the central object of worship to-day?"

"You might then say the Christians worship before images," he retorted.

"Thank you," I smiled—"that's precisely what I mean—the symbol has outworn the spirit."

"Please continue, Madam! I understand exactly," said the Maharajah.

Thus encouraged I spoke of the condition of all existing religions, which I said had disintegrated and were sadly in need of renewal.

At this the Zoroastrian smiled, while the Moslem looked his protest, but, in the face of the interest of the Maharajah, said nothing.

"What objection," I went on, "is there in buying a new suit when your old one wears out? Islam served its purpose at its time, likewise the others. Now they've become worn, bedraggled forms. Isn't the present condition of our world—the failure of our leaders to formulate a plan that will meet the economic needs of to-day—proof enough that our creeds are outworn and that something entirely new is needed to dynamize the hearts of people into a realization of what is ahead?"

Back and forth the barbs of argument flew, with the Maharajah upholding me.

When I left Patiala two days later, it was with the certitude that this corner of India was friendly to women's

progress and at least tolerant of my Bahá'í endeavour. A few years later, when the British Empire's round-table conference was held in London in 1932, it was the beautiful Maharanee of Patiala—exquisitely arrayed, huge jewels glittering in her ears—who spoke on behalf of India and told the British statesmen why India should be free. The Maharajah had taken his charming wife out of purdah, where no Hindu woman ever meets a strange man, and had trained her so well that she was able to address these dignitaries with a poise and effectiveness that few college-trained Western women could equal.

Following an exciting visit to a polo game, I was touring through the Maharajah's extensive state, when our car stopped at one of the food stalls in the market-place and my eye fell on such an unexpected sight that I involuntarily exclaimed :

"Caviar here!—and fresh caviar at that! How in the world do you manage to transport it here without bottling?"

"Fresh caviar?" echoed my companion.

"Certainly, fresh caviar. Why the roe are as big as tapioca, instead of the usual pin-head size in glass jars, and they glisten like the caviar you get in Russia."

"Why, Madam," expostulated my companion, whose eye had followed the direction of my outstretched hand, "Madam, that is honey!"

"Honey?" I repeated in a stupefied manner. "Well, that's the strangest honey I have ever seen."

I climbed out of the car and stepped toward the glistening black honey, where I was nearly blinded by a cloud of tiny flying forms that suddenly burst from the tub.

"Oh, Madam," cried my companions, with a sudden illumination, "those are flies!"

At luncheon the next day I commented on the Maharajah's well-kept estate.

"But can't something be done about sanitation in the village?" I added. I told him about my experience with the flies.

"Well, make a suggestion," the Maharajah invited.

“Well, suppose you pay a small bounty—say, half anna for every thousand flies that are caught,” I suggested.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed the Maharajah, “that would never do! They’d incubate them!”

CHAPTER XXXV

MONUMENTS AND MYTHS

MY first view of the Taj Mahal was by moonlight. The proprietor of the little tourist hotel, an Englishman, motored me out to see it, the night of my arrival. Dreamlike—a phantasy in marble! Looking at it I could understand the poet describing its architecture as “frozen music.” Built in white marble, it still remains the most exquisite edifice in the world. Standing in the red sandstone entrance to the park which surrounds it, the dome of the Taj seems to float like a milk-white bubble, a gigantic pearl at the end of a long vista of sparkling fountains and cypress trees. Or one can see it across the clear river in whose waters its beauty is mirrored. It was near here, across the river, that the bereaved Shah Jehan proposed to build a companion memorial of black marble for himself.

Viewing it by day, in its setting of turquoise sky and gardens of tropical beauty, I could well understand why the son of Shah Jehan, after killing his brother, imprisoned his father in the jasmine tower of the palace for fear he would spend the remainder of his imperial fortune completing his ambitious scheme. The milk-white marble of this poem of architecture is inlaid with precious stones—jade, cornelian, rubies, lapis lazuli brought from Russia, malachite, amethyst, mother-of-pearl and coral. Some of the floral decorations have fifty different shades of colour.

In the centre of the structure, just beneath the dome, a marble screen, so marvellously wrought that it appears to be made of lace, surrounds the gem-inlaid tombs of Shah Jehan and his wife, Mumtaz-i-Mahal, the Light of the Palace.

The carving can never be duplicated. The foremost

artists of India and foreign lands have been brought here to replace broken bits of the structure, but they cannot equal the original.

The Taj is said to have cost the equivalent of thirty-five millions of dollars in pre-New Deal gold, a sum which only an economist could translate into present-day value. It took twenty thousand workmen seventeen years to complete, and the revenue of thirty villages to maintain.

Had the Shah Jehan been able to build his black marble dream, the fortune of the great Mogul empire might indeed have disappeared.

Built by the Mogul conquerors, Agra had been for long periods the capital of India. The Moslems built as they ruled and fought—with inspiration. Nowhere in the Western world have I seen such a magnificent house of worship as the three-domed pearl mosque built by Shah Jehan, or a more sumptuous palace than the white marble Jahangiri Mahal of the great Akbar, grandfather of Jehan, with its marble screens, its gem-incrusted pillars, its marble bath and court with an artificial lake.

On my last visit to the Taj I noticed in startling contrast to the white marble above the doorway a black marble inscription in Arabic letters. My guide informed me that it was a text from the Koran, which says :

“Saith Jesus, ‘This is a bridge. Pass thou over it, but build thy soul not upon it. The world is one hour. Give its minutes to thy prayers, for the rest is unseen.’” In all my mother’s years of Bible reading aloud I could not recall hearing these words of Jesus.

How many Western visitors observe this message of a Christian on the Taj. I wondered. Further, where are these priceless utterances of Jesus that we Christians have lost? I once heard, on very good authority that something like thirty-six lucid Gospels were written within the first Christian century, and only four appear in the New Testament.

It seems to me that I recall being taught that Muhammad was a false prophet. Therefore this tribute from a Moslem more than amazed me.

"How many of these priceless gems have we? How many are lost?" I wondered.

Apparently the Moslems did not stumble over the personality of Jesus, as the Jews did, and as the average Christian is doing to-day over the most recent of law-givers, Bahá'u'lláh. Usually when talking with a Christian, the fact that Bahá'u'lláh was of Muhammadan parentage, condemns Him in their minds. They entirely forget that Jesus was of Jewish origin. It never occurs to them that Bahá'u'lláh no more emphasized the dogma-encrusted creed of Islam than Jesus promoted the out-worn creed of Judaism.

Everywhere is this contradiction between the hope that the promised Messiah of all religions will return, and the viewpoint that there was none before their particular prophet and never will be another like him.

This very promise, common to all religions, is evidence of the successive message of spiritual guidance, one in their basic reality, which the race has received from time to time. The Prophets themselves have always sought to establish the fundamental truth of their predecessors, as did Muhammad regarding Abraham, Moses and Jesus in the Koran, and have always pointed to their successors, as did Jesus. The Buddhists are looking for the fifth Buddha; the Jews for their Messiah; the Moslems for the Madhi; the Christians for the return of the Christ, etc. What other meaning than the essential unity of these great Spirits could Jesus have meant when he said "Before Abraham was, I AM." He certainly did not mean the man Jesus of Nazareth, but rather the Christ Spirit. Yet a human name, a human personality, the country of his birth, befores the insight of those ardently awaiting the Messenger's coming. I verily believe that millions of earnest Christians are convinced He should be a perfectly good one hundred per cent American or European when He comes!

Two or three centuries after His coming it's easy to follow the crowd and accept. Then it's popular. The acid test of individual perception is to recognize Them at the time of Their appearance or soon after, when

epithet of "crank" or "fanatic," etc., are the mildest form of criticism, and martyrdom the strongest.

"There are chapters in the book of life. It would seem that a cycle is now completing, a dispensation ending, a new chapter about to begin. We may be at the door of a new era which shall be even greater than a renaissance. The division between the material and the spiritual has become so thin that who can tell whether the human intelligence or the divine spirit may not break through so that a new revelation would result and the spiritual life receive a quickening not unlike that which marked the incarnation when an inflow of divine power came into the world and God was manifest in the flesh."

From *The Coming Renaissance*, by J. C. Carlisle.

Benares is the combined Mecca and Jerusalem of some two hundred thousand or more human beings who journey here from all parts of the Hindu world to drink and bathe in the holy river Ganges; to make a pilgrimage of the fifty-mile holy way that encircles it and to worship at some of the two thousand temples and countless shrines. A great Pilgrim house, supported by a powerful Maharajah, houses the pilgrim, but for the visiting Occidental, facilities are among the worst in the East. Nevertheless, the beaming landlord of the hotel to which the porter directed me at the station when I asked for the "best hotel," had also read of my exploits in the lecture field at Rangoon and ushered me, in person, to the best room.

Wishing to see the bathing ghat, I started forth at five o'clock the next morning, accompanied by a very intelligent Hindu guide. The streets in the greying light were already thronged with pilgrims. By the time we reached the embankment and had walked down the stone steps, the sun was rising over the green hills on the opposite side of the river.

The increasing light revealed the full bow sweep of the Ganges for a distance of perhaps four miles. Fascinating shrines and temples lined the western bluff. The throngs of worshippers wading into the yellow

water, immersed their heads and bodies and drank of the water from brass bowls.

It was a gay scene, a colourful phantasmagoria. The bathers, their foreheads stencilled in red, yellow and other colours to designate caste, were jubilant in their belief that whoever drinks of the holy water will gain salvation. Holy water and baptism—ritual common to many religions. How many keep the form? How many find the spirit?

Sitting on the edge of a raft which jutted out from the bank beneath an awning of reed and bamboo were the widows, and on rafts covered with large coloured umbrellas the married women. Kneeling or squatting upon the stairs and before the shrines were men and boys busy with ablutions and prayers—each with the ubiquitous brass bowl.

Boarding a little river craft I passed the many burning ghats where men were heaping wood for pyres on which to consume the bodies wrapped in red cloth which lay nearby. I watched a body placed on a pyre. More wood was added, oil poured over and the nearest of kin, in this case the husband, threw a flaming torch upon the pyre. It took about four hours to reduce a body to ashes, which was then pushed off the bank into the river near the bathers.

The ceremony of cremation for men appears to be the same as for women, except that the men's bodies are wrapped in white, while the women must have red. I thought it should be the reverse. If the family of the deceased cannot afford to purchase enough wood, it often happens that the body is not entirely consumed. This, however, makes no difference to the person's soul, because the unburned parts, together with the ashes, are thrust into the "holy river"—direct oath to Vishnu without undergoing endless reincarnations.

Smallpox and leprosy victims enjoy the peculiar distinction of having their bodies, with a weighty stone attached, thrown into the holy Ganges without first being cremated.

All day long the pilgrims bathe and drink in the Ganges, apparently unmindful of the ashes drifting by.

The water ought to be rather "high" for consumption. As a matter of fact, the British authorities have had it chemically analysed, and according to my guide have found it exceptionally pure, evidently containing some antiseptic properties.

For a time I watched the flames whirl under the funeral pyre. But when I saw the shroud burn off, exposing the feet, and then saw the legs fall off around the knees, I lost my appetite for cremation and slipped away to other scenes.

In the meantime, the fires of other funeral pyres had leaped up along the river on other burning ghats, accentuating a new nightmare *motif* in this scene of gaiety.

From the temples and shrines, magnificent, elaborate, gilded, that form a background for this bizarre scene, come the sound of drums and horns and cries of ecstasy and prayer. The resplendent Golden Temple, with its gilded spires, displays its phallic symbols, and women practise exceptional ablutions to Siva. Slender temple maidens chant prayers and hang yellow garlands over the fat necks of the sacred cows. Monkeys, the representatives of the god Hanuman, climb the temple walls, chatter and beg food from the worshippers. I almost had my finger badly bitten by one, trying to feed it peanuts. Krishna, Vishnu, and Ganesha, Hindu version of the ever-recurring trinity form, lure by the thousands their devotees, who bring offerings of flowers and fruit. Mingled with the music and prayers is the odour of sacrificial roses and jasmine, human sweat and incense.

Lining the narrow streets about the temples are booths selling lucky images of various gods and flowers and food for sacrifice. Contorted beggars and fakirs crouched with bowls extended. The pilgrimages support thirty thousand members of the priestly caste in this city of two hundred thousand.

I thought of the Buddha who said: "When a stream is choked with weeds and scum, it is necessary to cleanse the stream of the weeds and bring the scum to the surface in order to remove it. Then, if the stream is muddy, leave it alone, and the water will clear."

As I walked back past the temple of Vishnu and the row of fakirs, lying on their spines, stretching out handless stumps or holding emaciated arms in air, an ash-besmeared, half-naked human being held out his bowl.

"Please, lady?" His body was a living skeleton, his head a skull covered with skin.

"What do you want?" I asked.

"Money," he replied in a whining voice. "I am a holy man."

"Holy man!" The words burst forth violently. "You a holy man! You lazy hound. The British ought to do what they do in America for people like you—build you a hoose-gow!"¹

All this fanaticism, built on superstition, imitation and tradition, will dissolve—is dissolving under the intelligent consciousness of great men and women of India, who have turned the pages of the book of To-day and found "Reality" written in letters of fire.

¹ American slang for prison.

CHAPTER XXXVI

PAGAN AND IDEAL

EN route to the State of Rajputana to visit the Maharajah of Ghalawar I had to change trains at a wayside junction. It was sunset and the connecting train was not due until next morning. As there was no accommodation in the village, there was nothing to do but spend the night in the small, badly ventilated, station rest-room.

To add to the physical discomfort, the night was hot and humid. I hired a boy to sit outside my room and pull a punhak overhead that stirred the stagnant air. That day a tiger had entered the town and made off with a native child, the telegraph operator told me. It was believed that the beast was still lingering about. With this pleasant thought in mind, I was falling asleep when gradually I became conscious that the punkah had slowed down. I arose and slipped on the first thing that came to hand—a lace *négligée*—and stepped out on the platform. The boy had tied the cord to his toe and fallen asleep.

The oppressive heat lay upon the earth like a blanket. Through the darkness ahead, I perceived a cluster of torches flickering. They seemed only a few hundred yards away. Curiosity getting the better of me, I slowly strolled toward them. I must have walked five hundred yards when I suddenly realized I had come upon a circle of Hindus performing a religious rite to drive the tiger from their precincts. Too late I remembered it is considered dangerous for foreigners to be gazing upon “forbidden” ceremonies.

At that same instant one of the priests saw me standing in my long diaphanous robe, looking utterly unlike a human woman, I presume, in the shadowy darkness. Most everyone at that time was wearing short skirts

above, too often, ungainly legs. At any rate, they must have mistaken me for an apparition. By this time I realized that I was too far from the railway station to run back, so I stood still, trying to look as nearly as possible as though I had been divinely created for just this occasion.

As the natives came forward, my heart nearly jumped out of my mouth—in spite of my clenched teeth. But they came reverently, escorted me to the seat of honour on a crude wooden platform and sat around in a circle staring while they continued with the ceremony as though uninterrupted.

Wishing all the while for a cognac to keep me from swooning, I sat with what I considered angelic serenity until the prayers ended and the clashing of cymbals ceased and the natives stood up with their hands stretched out in appeal. Whereupon I called upon all my thespian talents, made a dignified, yet what I believed to be a seraphic exit. My movements were so cautious that they evidently believed me to be disappearing gradually and at the same time putting a jinx on the tiger, so they remained in the circle until I had vanished into the night. Whether the tiger ever returned or not I never discovered.

At six o'clock the next morning I boarded the train for Ghalawar, where a beautiful French car was waiting to take me to the home of the Maharajah twenty miles away, past fields and through wooded country.

The Maharajah of Ghalawar was the first ruler to accept the Bahá'í teachings and attempted to put them into practice in his domain. In 1900 the late Lua Gersinger, a pioneer American Bahá'í, who had dedicated her life to the spread of Bahá'u'lláh's cause throughout the world had visited the Maharajah. He became so interested in the world plan she outlined that he insisted she remain as his guest for several weeks. She occupied a suite, one room of which had been converted into a most beautiful library. Its walls were lined from floor to ceiling with shelves of books exquisitely bound.



PRESENT MAHARAJAH, SON OF THE LATE MAHARAJAH OF GHILAWAR

I spoke of Lua Getsinger to the Maharajah when I called upon him and he honoured me by assigning her suite to me. I stayed four days and, following Lua's example, spent several hours daily in the library studying volumes on comparative religion so ably translated by Max Muller.

I wandered at daybreak through the village that adjoins the royal residence and was captivated by the immaculateness of the rows of little clay houses. Doors stood wide open to admit the morning breeze, displaying the spotless interiors. Each crudely hewn-out window-hole, worn smooth by endless scouring, framed a flaming, potted geranium.

The Maharajah had educated his people to many ideals, in accordance with the plan first disclosed to him by his brilliant and spiritual American sister.

A more striking example of Bahá'i influence was the model State prison which I visited with the Maharajah and the handsome young Maharaj, who succeeded to the throne following his father's death in 1933. I was astonished to find a prison without cells, hideous uniforms or chains. Prisoners were allowed free movement within boundaries and there was no restriction on talking.

They were treated more like convalescing hospital patients. They slept in dormitories, worked at trades and were paid a regular wage which was given to their families.

The clay floors of the dormitories were clean and shining and each built-in clay bed boasted a spotless blanket, neatly rolled at its head.

Prisoners were engaged in weaving rugs in a large, airy room, and stopped to talk to us with a freedom that probably few American or European factory workers would dare to assume. One of them stepped forward, bowed to the Maharajah, then to me, and requested:

"Your Highness, may we present Madam with the rug now on the loom?"

"If the lady wishes it, most certainly," the Maharajah replied.

I was delighted. The rug was cut from the warp, rolled up and put into the car beside the chauffeur. One

of the men accompanied us through the garden—lovely in its setting of shrubs, trees and flowers.

We were about to leave the prison through the main entrance, when we were confronted by a prisoner who pointed to a great book lying open on a table. He spoke in Hindustani to the young Maharaj, who translated the request for my inscription. As I bent over, pen in hand, I was surprised to notice names of well-known American and European visitors who had preceded me to this model state. I wrote :

“There is no prison greater than the prison of self—Abdu’l Bahá,” beneath which I signed my name.

When this was translated, the prisoner’s face broke into a radiant smile, and he bowed low.

Ghalawar’s prison might well serve as a model for any advanced country. A few years later I heard that many of the features of this regime were being introduced into Mexico.

Although the Maharajah had been educated in India, the young Maharaj had been sent to schools in England. He spoke flawless English and was deeply interested in Shakespearian drama. He had built a theatre, where young Hindu students of the better families gave performances, sometimes as often as once a week, of Shakespeare, Barrie, Galsworthy and modern playwrights.

He had invited me to a tiger shoot, which limited time forced me to forgo, and to allay my disappointment, brought out the sacred elephant. It was far more magnificent than the so-called “white” elephant of Bangkok, Siam, and was all a-glitter with regal trappings of scarlet, gold braid, embroidery and a gleaming, carved, solid silver howdah. Draped in a Hindu sari, I climbed up a ladder and seated myself on a silver throne while the beast moved majestically about the royal gardens. There is nothing more magnificent, more splendidly representative of the pomp and glory and wealth that one associated with the Indian maharajahs than a sacred elephant in regal trappings.

Later, the hospitable young Maharaj escorted me up the river to view the crocodiles and the ancient palace, still well preserved, a few miles from the modern residence.

When the time for my departure arrived, the Maharajah expressed again his gratitude to Lua Getsinger and, as a token of respect and admiration, presented me with a large square emerald in her memory.

Every year thereafter I received a handsome Christmas card from my Maharajah friend in Ghalawar; and I mourned his passing with deep regret.

CHAPTER XXXVII

MULLAHS AND POETS

A YEAR later, returning from India, after several months in the Far East with its marble palaces and jewel-encrusted temples, I felt an urge to visit ancient Shiraz, the synonym of poetic inspiration.

As we steamed through the straits of Oman, the Arabian Sea became the Persian Gulf, and I watched the pale yellow headlands jutting towards me across the intervening stretches of turquoise. Farther ahead lay the land of poets' gardens and nightingales, the quatrains of Omar, the poetic pearls of Hafiz and the Gulistan of Saadi—the enchanted verses of the Báb, which literally dynamized the whole of Persia during the past century.

I imagined that spring-time in Shiraz and the South of Persia might offset my disappointment of the year previously in the northern part. The Persia I had visualized was a land of romantic history and mystic wisdom.

The steamer anchored some distance from the end of the peninsula in a raging sea. We climbed down the side of the rolling ship to the bobbing "buggalow" waiting to transport the passengers and their luggage to the wind-swept beach, where the ramshackle custom house shivers beside a group of little wooden huts. It took not a little courage to leap at the right moment from the ship's step to the flying buggalow in order to avoid a cold plunge into the waves, and then to watch one's luggage being thrown on board, sometimes barely escaping the sea. The sea was choppy and rough enough to almost make one feel that Bushire and even Shiraz was not worth the effort to get there.

Bushire lies pathetically upon the barren, uninviting earth, without so much as a tree or blade of grass to

offset the drab approach to its dockless harbour. I wondered what had happened to the fleet once launched there by Kerim Khan Zend, the great Viceroy of Shiraz, and which his brother Sadek Khan had used against the Turks. Persia had never had a flair for naval conquest. Her lack of interest in obtaining her share of the spoils of the Gulf, while others reaped the rich harvest, bears out this fact indisputably.

My approach had been heralded through the city, and I was welcomed by several Bahá'is who took charge of my luggage and relieved me of the tiresome custom's inspection. We swiftly fled through the twisting streets past the government, telegraph, bank and other rather imposing blocks of square buildings, past crowds of black-robed women, men in flowing *abas* and European clothes topped by the black *kulah* or lamb-skin fez, worn by State officials, and occasional Zoroastrians.

Between robed figures, camel and donkey trains, we hastened through narrow streets, flanked by delicately tinted plaster walls, pierced by frowning shuttered or latticed windows. Bushire looked utterly different from Persia's northern gate. And, as for roses and nightingales, the flowers had withered and the few scraggy trees we passed looked far too bare to evoke the bulbul's serenade.

A handsome young man with finely cut Ayran features, splendid dark eyes and jet black hair, informed me a lecture had been arranged for the late afternoon. He added that about one hundred young men had recently shown an interest in the Bahá'i teaching and would attend my lecture.

Finally, after zigzagging through narrow streets, we arrived at the home of my host, which was simply but comfortably furnished after the style of a modest Western house, with white enamelled beds, bureau and plain chairs of oak, others stuffed and wearing crocheted bibs. Hospitality was not lacking. Sumptuous meals were served, mostly *pilau*, which is rice cooked with finely cut pieces of lamb. There were too many different varieties of this staple dish to be able to describe them. Persian melons, baby cucumbers, pomegranates and other

fruits were served in abundance with each meal. The juice of the pomegranate flavouring the stew served on the *pilau* is considered a delicacy. The skin of the small young cucumber, which is eaten like an apple, is never removed. Quarts of cultured milk called *mausht*, like *yogurt*, is consumed with each meal. This is considered excellent as a cleanser for the body.

My lecture was held in a large room in the home of a believer, furnished for this purpose. I was conducted to a large house and into a good-sized courtyard, then into the hall where about two hundred men of all ages filled the closely packed chairs in the centre of the room, while every inch of floor space was covered with eager faces. "Unity between Science and Religion" was my subject. It evoked such intense interest in the younger generation, those between twenty and thirty years of age, that I was told about fifty young men joined the assembly afterward. So enthusiastic were these youths that they threw discretion to the winds and openly repeated everything I had said to friends and acquaintances alike. This created an uproar in the city and aroused the fury of the mullahs who decided such a speaker was dangerous to Islam. I learned months later at Tihrán that my host had been commanded by the authorities to speed his guest on her way the following morning not later than ten o'clock, or they would not be responsible for her safety.

Ignorant of the order, I returned from an enjoyable evening and retired, only to awaken about two in the morning with a sense of foreboding, and a desire to be off to Shiraz at daybreak. Having come to this seemingly unreasonable decision, I slipped into a robe and stepped out in search of my host. His astonishment at my *déshabillé* showed clearly on his fine face, and was replaced by horror when I asked how to locate a motor-car for a trek to Shiraz at daybreak. He assured me it could not be done and that nothing short of a week in Bushire would be considered. After a long conversation, and realizing I was deadly in earnest and not merely sleep-walking, he despatched a servant to hunt the city over for a car and driver. I felt most ungrateful, especially when he finally decided that he had somehow failed in

hospitality. He was sitting in an attitude of prayer when I emerged from my room the first time. An hour later I heard mumbling voices and went forth to investigate, just in time to find him sending a man away from the door. A dilapidated Ford stood outside. I told him I would take a chance, and was bundled into it with a youthful Bahá'i for my escort, my luggage tied all over the outside and behind the renders.

Luckily for me I did not know that steps were to be taken to oust me from the little Persian city, for I should most certainly have refused to leave and might have run foul of priestly wrath and found a similar fate to the American Consul, Major Imbrie. My Swiss grandfather's love of adventure was too strongly inherited to permit any mullah to dispense with me so easily, had I been informed.

The early morning was bitterly cold, but I was on my way to the city of poets, and eagerly looking forward to a visit to the "House of the Báb," where he had first received the inspiration that was destined to herald the event of "One who would come after him," and who would unite a warring world and unify religion. Many of Europe's eminent scholars have written of the Great Revival that has already begun in the East. Professor Carpenter, principal of Manchester College, stated in a speech at Oxford, December 31st, 1912, that the late Dr. Jowett once said to him that he had been so deeply impressed with the teachings and character of the Báb that he thought Bábism, as the present movement then was known, might become the greatest religious movement since the birth of Christ.¹ Dr. Caird, successor of Dr. Jowett as Master of Balliol, has been quoted in a similar sense.

I was off at last on a road said to be a thousand miles long. I had expected to find a highway in the American sense. Instead, I found an ancient trail for pack-mules, which had been widened in places, twisting and climbing toward the stars like a gigantic stairway between walls of jutting rock around the base of towering, tawny cliffs and along the edge of terrifying precipice. Often

¹ *Christian Commonwealth*, January 22nd, 1913.

my heart leaped as, winding about a sharp turn on a ledge just wide enough for four wheels, I wondered what would happen should another car approach us. Oh, for an aeroplane!

Suddenly the petrol and oil blazed up in front of the car, converting it into a modernized version of Elijah's chariot. My escort began busily untying my suitcases, when the driver had a brainstorm, gathered sand and began quickly to smother the flames at the base of the engine.

The road became steep and we were forced to climb the hill on foot. Gazing over the steep incline into the deep chasm, we saw the dead carcasses of camels and donkeys that had lost their footing when a motor-car had suddenly sprung at them from behind a sharp curve in the winding road. They lay where they had fallen, one hundred feet below, devoured by vultures. One donkey carcass still tethered on a projecting ledge.

About ten miles further along the trail a small car belched forth flames and smoke, and I counted eleven Arabs standing disconsolately about as they had been *en route* to Bushire where they were to embark for Basrah, when their conveyance caught fire. How they had managed to fit into the five-passenger sedan was a mystery.

The first half-day's sojourn had been over a long stretch of sand leading to the Kotals. As we drove through this infested area, locusts rose in great buzzing clouds above our heads. What they survived on in this region I never did discover.

I spent the night at a telegraph rest-house, in a tiny cubical crevice called a room. A structure of solid wood with a lumpy mattress stood against the wall. I impressed the operator sufficiently to have a fine dinner served in my cell and an excellent breakfast the next morning of honey, bread, eggs and delicately flavoured tea.

The mountain air felt cool and stimulating after suffocating India, and it became colder and colder as we climbed upward toward the azure city. I inquired from the operator about the four seasons in Persia. These, I

had been told, could be depended upon to the day. What was this—spring or still winter? He assured me that spring followed winter, but something had happened for the last few years, and now it was different. I am afraid I laughed. For many generations my informant told me, products from Tihrán and Shiraz have been carried over this trail by camels.

"You can see one of them now!" He pointed out a wistful-eyed camel by the side of the road that had fallen and broken its knees. It meant death by slow starvation. That camel accompanied me in thought for hundreds of miles as I whizzed by dead carcasses on the oldest trail in Persia, and probably one of the oldest in the world.

About four o'clock in the afternoon, just as we were looking for a clearing by the road to try out our forgotten lunch, we came upon a ragged but happy family of nomads gathered about a small fire. They were travelling by cart and donkey, making their uncharted way as the spirit listeth, aided by Allah and a little discreet thieving!

Less than an hour later, as we rounded a long sweeping curve, we saw the walls of Shiraz below us in the distance, framed between two sepia hills. According to Saadi, travellers first viewing Shiraz were invariably so overcome with its beauty that they halted to cry out "God is Great." But the view which Saadi described is from the north, not the south. He wrote, many years ago, about seven centuries to be exact, and many changes have taken place since then.

The sun was already setting behind the snow-tipped mountain peaks above us, turning far-off brown and purplish ridges to russet gold, and the roofs of Shiraz to a rosy hue, when we crossed the bridge that leads to the city gate. We were halted at the gate of the city by gendarmes, who demanded to see my passport.

I reflected over the Shiraz of Saadi's Gulistan, or Garden of Roses, and of Hafiz' Divan. Before us clusters of pastel-tinted roofs and walls were set in a "narrow strip of herbage sown."

Like most Persian cities, Shiraz is a city of clay walls.

The outer walls, guarding the houses, courtyards and gardens within, are unpierced by openings, giving passers-by a shut-out feeling. There was a silence that must have been like the inspiration of the poet who sang :

Through the old city's silence
Where the Abana flows,
O hearken to the nightingale
Sing lyrics to the rose !
Yet well the lonely songster
Knows that the red rose hears :
Ah ! love—I need no answer
But let me see thy tears,
Ah ! let me see thy tears !

We drove to the address given me at Bushire—a magnificent home with a huge courtyard. At one side of this courtyard stood a building furnished after the style of a Western lecture hall and large enough to accommodate the hundreds who frequently meet there.

That evening I was taken to the "House of Báb." As we approached the house through narrow streets we walked at short distances behind each other like "Farmer Brown's cows," lest we attract attention of the fanatical mullah.

We entered through a heavily bolted, iron-bound, wooden door into a courtyard, passed through a gate into another courtyard where a building sat wrapped in moon-pierced shadows and mystic silence, as though quietly resting after the turmoil of hatred and persecutions which had followed its gentle owner as the forerunner of a world-regenerating faith less than a century ago. Deeply awed, I contemplated the history of a similar occasion some two thousand years ago when the early Christians met in the catacombs of Rome. Had we not passed through a similar experience this very night on our way to this hallowed spot whence had flickered forth the first glimmer of Light of the New Day ! Had we not, too, passed through dimly lighted thoroughfares, hazardous alleys, fearful lest we attract the notice of fanatics surging through the narrow streets ! Were

we not still walking amid the darkness of human prejudice and ignorance?

When we entered through the first door I found myself in a small courtyard, from which we entered a room dimly lit by variegated oil-lamps and candlelight. So this was the spot where it all began!

About twelve people, both men and women, were there quietly meditating when I entered. Later I learned that the exquisite little lady in black silk was related to Shoghi Effendi and also a cousin of the Báb.

Shortly one of my escorts softly entered and beckoned me to follow him. We went through the first courtyard, through another door which led to an intimate little garden in the corner of which stood a prolific orange tree that had been planted by the Báb himself.

When we ascended the narrow flight of stairs to the second storey I was under the impression that I was to be shown over the private portion of the house, but instead I found myself standing in the doorway of a room that held some particular fascination other than the delicate roses in relief which panelled the walls. Totally unconscious of the fact that I had sat down, I found myself on the floor, which was carpeted with a rare Persian rug, my mind soaring to heights hitherto unexperienced and indescribable. How long after I do not know, I rose, turned to find behind me some forty or fifty believers sitting in the same position in prayerful attitude.

I inquired what was that "mystical something" that pervaded the room I had just left, and was told in a rather subdued voice that it was the room in which the Báb had received his illumination!

"I thought that was the first room we visited . . ."

I was glad of that mistake. It proved my feelings in the real room to be no self-hypnotism. We so glibly speak of the "atmosphere" of a room or a house. That simple chamber held—Reality.

The Báb, whose name was Siyyid Ali-Muhammad, was born in Shiraz on the 20th October, 1819, a direct descendant of Muhammad and a member of a noble house. During his early childhood he lost his father, a

man noted for his honour and piety, and was brought up by his maternal uncle, who hoped to have the youth succeed him in business. But the Báb, engaging in a commercial enterprise, convinced his uncle that his calling was of a spiritual nature, and won his uncle's encouragement to pursue his chosen path.

On May 23rd, 1844, the Báb announced his mission and rapidly won an enthusiastic following by his eloquence, wisdom and inspired writings. At the same time he roused the jealousy and enmity of the orthodox mullahs, who persuaded the Governor of Fars to suppress the new "heresy." Thus began a series of persecutions that ended in the Báb's martyrdom in 1850.

The late Professor E. Granville Browne of Cambridge University wrote in his *A Traveller's Narrative* :

"And if anyone would reflect on the appearance of this Tree (The Báb) he will without doubt admit the loftiness of God's religion. For in one from whose life twenty-four years had passed, who was devoid of those sciences wherein all are learned, who now recites verses after such fashion without thought or hesitation, who in the course of five hours writes a thousand verses of supplications without pause of the pen, who produced commentaries and learned treatises of so high a degree of wisdom and understanding of the Divine Unity that doctors and philosophers confess their inability to comprehend those passages, there is no doubt that all this is from God."

Gertrude Emerson, after her visit to the "House of Inspiration," as the house where the Báb was born is called, is said to have written : "What truly wonderful people are the Bahá'is of Shiraz, what hospitality, what joyous radiance on their faces !"

I found them mostly from the higher walks of life, well-to-do business men and merchants, but whose whole-hearted, sincere enthusiasm and devotion to this great world movement was literally breath-taking. Where could one find their duplicate anywhere in the world I had thus far visited? Their deeds and lives have the same value as their words, which, after all, is the proof

of sincerity. What use prating and preaching Sunday after Sunday to a congregation of people who refrain from attending the service if their best apparel happens to be shabby or at the cleaners? There is a power behind this movement that fires the zeal of millions, regardless of whether or not their complexion measures up to Anglo-Saxon qualifications, such as pious humbugry, prejudice, colour, country, custom and creed."

H. G. Wells once said that "Man is a skin disease on a third-rate planet." But I soon learned in Shiraz that men can become as angels when a spiritual impetus lifts them above the level of savage, war-thirsty beasts. What is it that these millions of builders of the New World Commonwealth possess that makes them different from ordinary people?

As far as my comprehension could fathom they seemed to have contact with some radiance centre, with some higher power, something that I was unable to define, but about which I meant to discover.

Professor Eddington throws a ray of illumination on the problem from a scientific angle when he places the scientific and the mystic experiences with the workings of the conscious mind, admitting that spiritual and human values elude science because they elude measurement, but that "the mystic has claims as valid as those of the scientist."

Morning was just breaking over the far hills when we motored through the east gate of Shiraz and along the broad tree-flanked highway that leads to the ruins of Persepolis, the first step *en route* to Isfahan. As we left the green plain which circles the city to wind up the brown hill trail, now suffused with a pink glow, we stopped to catch our last view of Shiraz, the one celebrated by Saadi. Framed by the sepia hills the city appeared in the rose-yellow dawn like some delicately executed water-colour, its earthen walls appearing in the distance to form a fragile bowl out of which rose black-green cypresses and the pale yellow dome of a single mosque.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

CITY OF MARTYRS AND GARDENS

AFTER chugging up a steep incline we reached the summit and saw on the plain far below a flash of delicate turquoise. It was the dome of the Shah's mosque and our first glimpse of delightful Isfahan, the ancient capital of Irán, which boasts the most famous thoroughfare throughout Persia, "The Four Gardens" or "*Chahar Bagh*." In the days of Shah Abbas' glory it was said to surpass in grandeur any promenade in Europe.

Now, almost completely stripped of its tiles stands the famous Madrasa of Shah Sultan Husayn. Just within the stained and battered silver *repoussé* doors a vegetable merchant hawks his wares. Beyond lies a court, its trees stark, its pools dry, leading to a mosque whose dome and minarets almost completely covered with tiles in elaborate patterns gives one an inkling of what Isfahan once must have been.

The Maidan-i-Shah, where centuries ago the Shah's regiments marched in review, where ceremonies of state were held and polo was played with all the pomp and circumstances of mediæval Persian pageantry, has fallen into decay. The quadrangle is surrounded by arcaded brick buildings, two stories high, above which rise the magnificent, many-coloured Shah's mosques, like an exquisite piece of cloisonné the orange-tiled Luft Allah mosque and the Ali Qapu. This square-shaped brick royal residence stands overlooking the centre of the quadrangle. Within the portico rising from its roof the enthroned Shah Abbas once sat in state, looking down upon processions, ceremonies and polo games from his sublimated box seat.

Of far greater interest to me was the Chihil Sutun,

literally Forty Pillars, where the friendly Governor, Manuchir Khan, of Isfahan, had once concealed the Báb.

Set in what was once a beautiful garden, but is now only an enclosure, this small building derives its name from the now faded portico which stands before it, reflected in a long, narrow pool. The pillars do not actually number forty, the number merely signifying a large number. When Shah Abbas used this edifice as his throne room, the walls and columns were completely covered with gilt-bordered bits of mirror. Now they are weather-beaten wood. In the rooms within the building are murals of the great ruler and his family, faded beyond recognition.

In the dark days when the hands of the mullahs were raised against the Báb, news that attacks had been made against him in Shiraz reached the Governor, who sent horsemen to Shiraz to bring him to Isfahan.¹ When the Báb arrived at Isfahan the two met in the home of a Moslem chief, and so impressed was the Governor by the Báb that he declared his belief in his mission. This aroused the jealousy of the mullahs, who at once informed the Prime Minister at Tihrán of the Governor's "apostasy."

In the meantime the Governor offered his services and all his wealth to the Báb. He proposed to win the Shah to the faith, to rid Persia of profligate ministers and marry the Báb to the Shah's sister.

"Not by the means which you fondly imagine will an Almighty Providence accomplish the triumph of His Faith—through the poor and lowly of this land, by the blood which these shall have shed in his path, will the omnipotent Sovereign ensure the preservation and consolidate the foundation of His Cause . . . of the span of your life there remains only three months and nine days."²

On the predicted day the friendly governor died, to be succeeded by his brother-in-law, Gorgin Khan. The new governor listened to the mullahs, communicated

¹ Professor E. G. Brown's *Episode of the Báb*.

² *Nabil's Narrative*, pp. 212-213.

with the Prime Minister, and received orders to bring the Báb to Tíhrán.

Isfahan can justly be called the City of Martyrs. Bahá'í history gives graphic, heart-rending accounts of those early pioneers whose lives were heroically and gloriously sacrificed for this great Faith.

The most recent victim was the brilliant Mrs. Keith Ransom-Kehler, an American, who successfully established the Local and National Administration of this new World Order throughout Persia. A magnificent white marble tomb has recently been designed and will be presented by the American believers, to be erected to her memory, close to the burial-place of the "King of Martyrs."

The Báb's devoted followers are still persecuted throughout Iran. During three journeys covering four years, in all Persia, freedom was most evident at Resht in the north. I was permitted to give a public lecture in the Bahá'í hall, after which the audience poured into the street as though from a theatre openly and without molestation. Recently persecutions have broken out anew and all Bahá'í activities are officially forbidden.

My very presence in Isfahan caused such furore among the clergy of Islam that after several private addresses and delightful social gatherings throughout the city I decided in the interest of my host and many new friends it would be the better part of valour to start for the capital at daybreak.

The fruit of Isfahan is luscious, and the flavour of the melons beggars description. As I was leaving Shiraz, a sack of dried pomegranates, the size of a bag of potatoes, was put into my car to my delight. By piercing their tough rind with manicure scissors, I consumed every last one, leaving a trail of little ruby pips all the way from Shiraz to Isfahan.

A few miles beyond Isfahan, our reckless driver was speeding along a winding road at the rate of fifty miles an hour when we overtook a train of camels and donkeys, belled and laden, *en route* to Tíhrán. Without slacking speed, the driver sounded the siren, the frightened beasts rushed out of line across the road and we collided

head on with one luckless camel. The car skidded but landed upright on top of a load of gravel, which had been dumped by the side of the road for construction. My head hit the top of the car with such force that I could feel the shock clear to the posterior end of my spinal column, upon which I was violently caromed. For the rest of the journey to Tihrán I lay across the back seat of the car with my feet protruding over the sides.

When we arrived at Tihrán the city was a blaze of light in honour of one of the numerous religious festivals. Thousands thronged the Lalazar. Oriental rugs hung from balconies and, together with the hanging oil-lamps which glowed against the rugs, gave the city an Oriental atmosphere in spite of glaring electric light globes. Lights must glare to the point of blindness. Most men I find have the Persian love of light, my husband, for one, insisting that the only places in the entire house where one can see to write in comfort are the bath-rooms and billiard room.

The ministrations of one of Tihrán's physicians, Dr. Lotfullah Hakim, soon made it possible for me to sit, stand and sleep without pain, and I was able to attend a number of dinners and receptions with some of the most interesting of the dignitaries sympathetic to Bahá'í activities. To one of these dinners, at the home of a major, I was escorted by three Bahá'ís. To make the best possible impression I had donned the simplest of black frocks, a small black turban and no jewels of any kind. But the disappointed look on the faces of my young friends was so obvious and their protestations so convincing that I returned to my apartment and dressed as though for a formal dinner at the legation.

When I reappeared, I was attired in pale green *moire* with costume ear-rings and bracelets, silver shoes and brilliant bag. Black, my escorts informed me, literally sickened men, while an evening gown was a most impressive introduction for an Occidental traveller. Seated at the centre of the table, I looked down the rows of men, most of them in uniform, who had been invited to meet a "modern exponent of religions."

In front of me stood a ponderous carved silver server, its candelabra-like branches bearing silver dishes of huge strawberries, baby cucumbers, pistachio nuts, honey and nut nougat from Isfahan, and flowers.

Following the usual remarks of a complimentary nature, one of the officers observed :

"Madam, I cannot believe that a lady so intelligent-looking as yourself can believe in God !"

"Are you serious ?" I asked. "How can anyone help believing in a God ?"

Emphatically he assured me that God was purely a myth. In reply I narrated the story of the "Fish at the great convention" :

"Once the fish of the ocean were having a great convention. So great were the arguments of the delegates to the congress, that the whole sea was disturbed by their fury. A beautiful little sun fish, swimming by, stopped for a moment amazed at the disturbance. 'What is the trouble ?' she asked. 'We are discussing what is ocean,' answered one of the delegates in an excited voice. 'Why not go to the great Solomon of the sea, who lives in the purple depths,' asked the little sun fish. So they all rushed away to the purple depths. 'Oh, great Solomon, tell us, What is ocean ?' 'That in which you move, and live and have your being,' answered the great sage. Back they went to their own homes, many of them still dissatisfied. The next day a fisherman threw his net into the sea, and many of these fish were caught in its mesh, and were dragged into the boat. 'What is this ?' shrieked one of the fish. 'This is a boat,' answered one of the wise old fish. 'Then what is that out there ?' 'That, my child, is the ocean,' answered the old one. The strong young fish began to leap, and to plunge, and gradually the thread of the net began to tear. With a great leap the fish jumped out of the boat, and felt the blue water close over her. 'Now I comprehend what is ocean,' she sang gaily."

"It is the same way with God," I continued. "Like the fish, we live and have our being in God's mighty ocean. Without God it would be impossible for us to

live a single instant. But, like the fish unable to behold the scene, we are unable to see the creative spirit in which we dwell.

"But like the sun fish swimming about in that ocean of love and understanding unfolded by a Persian of profound wisdom, it is strange that I should be explaining its existence to you who were born and have lived all your life in His native land. I can give you logical proof from Bahá'í point of view which proves the LARGER MIND back of creation: Abdu'l Bahá explains:

"When we look upon all forms of phenomena, we observe that they are the result of composition. For example, certain atoms are brought together through the inherent law of elective affinity existing between these various particles the result of which is the human being. A number of primordial atoms have gone into the make-up of a plant, the result of which is the flower. Again looking into the mineral kingdom, we observe that this law of cohesion is working in the same manner in that kingdom, for we see that many atoms go into the composition of a piece of stone which through purification may reach the state of a mirror.

"In short, the existence of life depends upon the composition and decomposition of phenomena. When the particles of a given composition are disintegrated, this may be called non-existent, but the original simple atoms will go back to their primary elements and are ever existent.

"For instance, the body of a man being the resultant factor of the composition of these atoms, when this body becomes the subject of decomposition we call it 'death,' but these atoms of which the body of man are composed, being simple and primordial, are indestructible. Consequently it is proved that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition and their mortality upon decomposition.

"This is a scientific principle: science disproves of it, because it is not a matter of belief. There is a great difference between theories upheld in belief, and facts which are substantiated by science.

"Beliefs are the susceptibilities of conscience, but

scientific facts are the deductions of reason and inexorable logic.

"Therefore it is logically proven that the existence of phenomena depends upon composition, and their destruction upon disintegration.

"Going back to the subject of the facts upheld by materialists. They state that inasmuch as it is proven and upheld by science that the life of phenomena depends upon composition and their destruction upon disintegration, then where comes in the need or necessity of a Creator? . . .

"We see with our own eyes that these infinite beings go through myriads of compositions and every composition appearing under a certain form showing certain characteristic virtues, then we are independent of any divine maker.

"This is the argument of the materialists. On the other hand those who are informed of the divine philosophy answer in the following terms:

"Composition is of three kinds:

"(Accidental.)

"(Involuntary.)

"(Voluntary.)

"There is no fourth kind of composition. Composition is restricted to these three categories.

"If we say that composition is accidental, this is philosophically a false theory, because then we have to believe in an effect without a cause. We cannot think of an effect without some primal cause, and composition being an effect, there must naturally be a cause behind it.

"The second composition, i.e. the involuntary composition. Involuntary composition means that each element has within it as an inherent function this power of composition. For example, certain elements have flowed towards each other, and as an inherent necessity of their being they are composed. That is, it is the imminent need of these elements to enter into composition. For example, the inherent quality, inseparable and advisable.

"As long as it is the inherent necessity of these elements to be composed there should not be any

decomposition. While we observe that after each composite organism, there is a process of decomposition, we learn that the composition of the organisms of life is neither accidental nor involuntary. Then what have we as a form of composition? It is the third, that is, the voluntary composition. That means that the infinite forms of organism are composed through a superior will. . . .

"This is a rational proof, that the Will of the Creator is effected through the process of composition. . . ."

This silenced my battery of critics. Having satisfied the inner man, with logic and reason, that there is a creative Intelligence, the outer men dined without regard to logic or reason till a late and festive hour.

My interesting days in Tihlán were abruptly cut short by a cable from home, reminding me that special guests were coming from Australia expecting to visit us at the farm. After a hasty farewell, I fled, promising to return a year later to work on behalf of the women of Persia.

CHAPTER XXXIX

TIHRÁN HAS A CORONATION PARTY

DURING the winter of 1928, after considerable manœuvring, I obtained a transit visé through Russia.

When I arrived at Baku, arrangements had been made for me to address more than one thousand men at a noon meeting. My address was not in conformity with the principles of the Communistic regime, therefore I was ordered to leave Russian soil as soon as possible.

The Russian official at Baku, a very charming and friendly man, held the boat for several hours while I leisurely lunched and prepared to leave, then escorted me to the waiting boat with an armful of flowers and, after kissing my hand, wished me success and *bon voyage* ! Little did I know what lay ahead. For, thrown out of Russia, I had in the meantime been forbidden to enter Persia, and I might have spent a pretty time riding back and forth between the two inhospitable shores on the little bug-infested ferry, like a doomed soul, unable to secure any passage across the River Styx on Charon's barge, had not Prince Arfa interceded with the Persian court in my behalf.

The same day of my departure from Baku, Prince Arfa was dining with the Shah, when he mentioned my intended visit in the interest of women. The Shah laughed and had "The" clipping from a Turkish newspaper brought in describing me as a "Bahá'i Missionary." Prince Arfa tried to assure the Shah that this was a misstatement and explained my letters from the International Council of Women and the Marchioness of Aberdeen authorizing me to work on behalf of women. He also reminded the Shah that a year or so previous an American journalist at Geneva had written to him, as Persia's representative

to the League, threatening to publish world-wide information of recent assassinations of members of the Bahá'í communities in Persia. Convinced that I had interceded to prevent this public disgrace to Persia, the Shah adopted Prince Arfa's suggestion that instead of refusing me entry to the country, I receive a courteous welcome.

When the steamer docked at Pahlavi, a splendid-looking officer singled me out and informed me that he had received a wire from Tihrán to pass my luggage "as diplomatic" and to receive me most courteously.

"Have you the name correct?" I asked. "Who has given these instructions?" He replied that the wire had come from the Imperial Court. I was speechless.

An hour after the aeroplane landed at Tihrán I hurried to the home of Prince Arfa and explained my Russian predicament to him. He explained his embarrassment with the Shah, to whom the article had been sent as well as to the Foreign Office of Russia, where missionaries are forbidden. He reminded me that had he not recalled the Geneva affair I should have found myself a prisoner on the Caspian Sea, barred at one end by Russia and at the other by Persia. Grateful to Shah Pahlavi for his consideration, I immediately wrote a letter of appreciation to his Excellency, Teymourtashe, then Minister of Court.

It did not take me long to discover that in matters of public lectures and other forms of propaganda, foreign to their regime, the approach must be through the Police Department. I drove to the office of the Chief of Police, a former general in the Ministry of Public Safety.

In spite of his reputation for severity, I found him to be most genial, and succeeded in getting on his tender side by use of a little stratagem.

"I came to Persia," I began, "to study the status of women. Lady Aberdeen, President of the International Council, wondered whether the women of Persia are sufficiently advanced for this organization. I am beginning to feel it would be impossible, so I have decided to do nothing about it this year."

"When are you coming again to Persia?" he inquired.

"Never!" I replied.

"Madam, my wife could introduce you to a number of prominent women who might cause you to change your opinion of their backwardness!" he retorted.

This was, of course, exactly what I desired to hear. I accepted his invitation, and called upon Madame and interested her in my plans.

A few days later the Chief of Police issued a permit for me to hold the first public lecture for women in a large hall, where I could speak on European women's organization. He gave me a list of the "Best" women in Tihrán—the Shah's daughter by his first wife, the wives and daughters of all officials, professional and military leaders chiefly, and requested that I have a letter mimeographed with a note at the bottom: "It will be necessary to bring this letter for admittance."

Then he had several policemen stationed at the entrance to the Zoroastrian Hall, situated in a large walled garden with iron gates.

I had hoped to organize a national council as a unit of the International Council of Women, the largest and most successful women's movement with local councils in five continents and almost every city in the world.

I held the first public meeting for women ever held in Persia and it was the talk of Tihrán! From morning till night a steady stream of women passed in and out of my room. Several of Tihrán's more progressive men called as early as eight in the morning. F. Dashti, who was intensely interested in the emancipation of Persian women from their degrading status, called to discuss ways and means and arranged for me to meet his brother, who managed the most liberal newspaper in Tihrán and was the youngest member of Parliament and an up-and-coming progressive. Later, M. Dashti arranged for me to meet at his home for tea, one of the most powerful mullahs in Persia, together with eight other mullahs. I decided to exercise my women's wishes on him so that he should look forward to my return to Persia later, meanwhile hoping he would keep his crafty fingers off the women and their council. M. Dashti, who interpreted for me, made a splendid suggestion to the assembled mullahs:



PRINCE ARVID DOWITCH

"Madam is our guest. Therefore, it would be polite to allow her to talk for thirty minutes without interruption. Then when she has finished we can discuss the matter !

Before the thirty minutes had barely begun, I saw the face of the most opulent mullahs become suffused with blood to the bursting-point. But after their rage evaporated they had little to say with the exception of the "bear," who sarcastically remarked :

"Tell her she looks rather expensively and elegantly dressed for a missionary, in the latest modes I noted while on a visit to Paris a few months ago."

"I am not a missionary," I replied, "and your own garments, especially that expensive-looking *aba* of camel's hair, is no mean way for a mullah to be rigged out, and you are supposed to be more than a missionary. Obviously, you found 'Gay Paree' attractive !"

This brought forth gusts of laughter from the others, and together we put Dashti through a heavy hour interpreting back and forth. Some shook hands and wished me success for women's education and freedom, acknowledging that the time had come for their liberation through education.

I was astonished to find that beneath the enveloping *chuddar* the modern Persian woman was attired in the latest and most extreme Western fashion, wore very *décolleté* evening gowns to afternoon functions, used rouge, lipstick and nail-polish lavishly. At first the sight was as incongruous to me as if I had discovered a nun wearing an evening gown beneath her robe.

Despite my hopes, I found little change since my first visit in 1926 in regard to women's restrictions. Every day brought new complications and inquirers to the hotel—women of the highest stratum of Persian society. No veiled woman had ever before openly entered a hotel, but I made it my business to meet them through telephone arrangement, routing the gate-man briskly out of our way as each lady appeared. Women still walked alone on the street even though married, were not permitted to meet a member of the opposite sex other than their husbands or close relations even in their own homes,

could not dine in public, attend public performances or even attend a public meeting.

Tihrán was in a ferment of excitement due to two unexpected happenings. The Shah, accompanied by armoured cars, had gone to Qum to defend the honour of the Queen; the Minister of War had been slain in guerilla warfare with the Bedouin Lor tribe in the mountains of Kurdistan.

While on a visit to Qum, the sacred city where the Shrine of Hazrate-i-Massoumeh, the sister of Imam Riza is located, the Queen had attended the mosque one afternoon with several of her ladies.

It happened to be the day when, according to tradition, everyone might discard black for a period of twenty-four hours. It was stifling hot and the Queen and the ladies in the balcony allowed the black *chuddar* to drop from their shoulders, not realizing that the presiding mullah was able to see them through an opening in the grille which shuts off the portion reserved for women.

Suddenly the mullah perched on his high pulpit began a violent tirade about women daring to enter the House of God disgracefully attired in indecent European fashions and bejewelled. His eye had caught the glitter of jewels and the row of bright-clad ladies. Loudly he commanded a young mullah to ascend the steps and order the women to cover themselves without delay.

At great length he raved: "Allah! What is the world coming to that women of Persia should come shamefacedly into the sacred shrine and unveil in its holy precincts!"

The Queen rose haughtily, disregarding the young mullah, and, followed by all the women present, hurried down the stairs and out of the mosque.

Just how the Shah learned so quickly of this ill-mannered affront to the Queen and her female retinue I have no idea, but possibly a report of the affair was conveyed to him by telephone or telegraphy, for the following day the Shah hurriedly left for Qum, with Teymourtashe and other officers in two armoured cars, in very bad humour. It was doubtless more than a sense of gallantry that caused the Shah to break two age-long traditions in

order to wipe out the unforgivable affront to his Queen. Immediately upon his arrival at the mosque, he entered the holy precincts, calling out for the mullah responsible for the outrage. The mullah, realizing no doubt what his capture might mean, instantly fled, and after a lengthy and thorough search had been made was nowhere to be found. Teymourtashe himself told me how he had continued to smoke his cigarette as he followed the Shah into the thickly-carpeted interior, wearing boots and spurs, where no shoe has ever trod before, and how tremendously elated he had felt on perceiving the uneasiness and increasing horror of the mullahs at this breaking down of an old custom and in witnessing the destruction of some of the greatest hypocrisy which had been in existence for centuries.

At this moment the Shah's eyes fell upon a criminal who had been wanted by the police for more than a year, and who had taken sanctuary in the mosque, knowing that he would be perfectly safe there from the hand of the law. Mosque and State had decreed that not even the most hardened criminal could be arrested while seeking protection within the walls surrounding the shrine, and consequently the mosque had become a common asylum for criminals of every type and description. Their friends or relatives were in the habit of smuggling food and changes of clothing to them beneath the folds of *aba* or *chuddar*. All mosque courtyards have fountains where worshippers must first wash their hands, face and feet before entering the inner Holy of holies. So it was not altogether an easy matter for one to sleep on the magnificent rugs, wash and eat in the courtyard for as long as it was necessary, which often was a matter of one or two years, without leaving the walls.

There, crouching on the rug in a prayerful attitude not far away, sat the hunted man, when the Shah, turning to Teymourtashe, commanded: "Have him taken to Tihrán for trial!" The wretched creature cringed before him, pleaded and cried: "But, Your Majesty, it is forbidden to take me from the mosque." "Get up and go!" the Shah shouted. Thus ended the antiquated custom of "sanctuary" as well as the mullah's supremacy even in

the mosque over the Shah. At that moment, Church and State felt the reverberations of future victory over superstition and bigotry.

On stationery of the International Council of Women I had mimeographed a two-page treatise on women's emancipation, translated by a brilliant Persian scholar, with my signature attached as representative of forty million women of the world. . . . Teymourtashe assured me he had delivered this letter into the hands of the Shah *en route* for Qum.

In Baghdád a few weeks later, I was thrilled to read in the newspapers a short but significant article to the effect that: "The women of Persia had been granted permission to enter public buildings, hotels, cafés, etc., when accompanied by their husbands."

Through His Excellency, Teymourtashe, the Minister of Court, I received an invitation to the two-day festival in honour of the anniversary of the Shah's coronation. I attended, accompanied by the Persian representative to the League of Nations, who had been recently appointed to the Secretariat at Geneva, and the most popular and ambitious youngest Member of Parliament.

The first evening we attended the official banquet extended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs to foreign ambassadors, ministers and other dignitaries, in the court called "Takhte Marmar" (Marble Throne).

The following evening came the reception in the Palace court called "Gulistan" (Rose Garden), an immense court garden surrounded by historic palaces, including one of the finest examples of pure Persian architecture, the lofty "Shams-ol-Imash," its walls a-glitter with rare and beautiful coloured tiles. This eighteenth-century building with its tall clock tower is the highest edifice ever erected in Persia in modern times. The "Palace of Mirrors," or "Brilliant Place," the interior of which is decorated with a million diamond-like mirrors, is the royal audience-hall. Here princes and statesmen in ceremonial uniforms assemble after

sunset to be presented in the central audience-hall or throne-room to the Shah and his ministers. His Imperial Majesty reviews a select regiment of the Guards and listens to a poem of praise composed for the occasion and recited by the Court Poet-Laureate.

Beyond the throne-room extends the great banquet hall in which the coronation anniversary dinner is celebrated. The Prime Minister and members of the Cabinet escort the wives of the leading foreign ambassadors to dinner, while the officials and lesser dignitaries occupy the rest of the five hundred chairs in order of precedence. In matters of court graces, Persia is not backward. After dinner the guests are led into the magnificent Imperial Museum Hall, which contains some of the most valuable masterpieces of Persian and foreign art known.

The supposed "Peacock Throne," as well as the "Jewelled Throne" ordered by Fath-Ali Shah (a contemporary of Napoleon I), are in this room.

The reception at the palace, in spite of the absence of the Shah, eclipsed anything I had attended in the East. The Shah had not yet returned from his excursion against the Lurs, and the young Crown Prince, aged nine, did the honours with an air of one to the manner born. All evening he stood on a dais in the central audience-hall in his fine blue and gold braided uniform, and received us as we were presented by Teymourtashe. When the young prince was told that the lady before him had met many rulers, but that he was by far the youngest, he smiled, saluted and clicked his little heels together. When Teymourtashe added that she had travelled in seventy-two countries his large brown eyes widened considerably.

Later in the evening, the entire company of assembled guests were invited into the vast garden courtyard, where, strolling by the deep pools, they were amazed at the marvellous display of fireworks reflected in the water. For many years a German had been employed in the government arsenal to design for this special occasion examples of pyrotechnic art which European and cosmopolitan observers declare unparalleled in the West.

Famous scenes of mythology were re-enacted in fire. Ancient Persian warriors fought with lions, the Great Kings of Persepolis flashed into ancient glory, a spectacle which could have only been matched by the festivities of Haroun al-Raschid as recorded in the *Arabian Nights*.

Though alcohol is strictly taboo, according to the precepts of Muhammed, some five hundred quarts of Paul Roger champagne were opened with untold quantities of whiskey and liqueurs, and the banquet tables laden with European viands.

A few days after the reception I was informed that the young prince during his French lesson had suddenly asked that a geography book be brought to him, promising to finish the French lesson later. When the book was brought, he opened it quickly, and said : " Last evening I met a lady who had travelled in seventy-two countries : Where are those seventy-two countries outside of Persia ? "

CHAPTER XL

MESHED

ACCOMPANIED by Shakrullah Takesh—a prince, offshoot of the old dynasty—then employed in the Secretariat of the British Legation, I set out one frosty morning to fly from Tihlán to Meshed. I had been assured the plane was a coupé and therefore took it for granted that it would be upholstered with something other than cracks large enough to put your finger through. When we arrived at the aerodrome I found to my dismay that the plane was a one-seated affair for summer weather or freight. It was made of corrugated metal, and was even cold to look at that very wintry morning at daybreak. The agent of the continental firm had given me no warning when I had made my reservations, so I had come in silk hose, *suede* shoes and light moleskin coat with my heavy garments tightly squeezed into the tail of the machine as luggage.

I took one look at the two huge Russian eskimos who were to be my fellow-passengers, at their sheepskin coats and high boots lined with fur, then hied me straight for the aerodrome shed to express my opinion of the Air Line and its accommodations. After a spirited debate, I decided to take a chance.

Shakrullah Takesh squashed me in between himself and one of the Bolsheviks, making four in one seat. A few minutes later we were soaring over Tehlán toward the distant snow-tipped mountains. Scarcely had we left the ground when the wind rose with a roar that could be heard above the noise of the motor, the temperature fell lower and lower and I felt the two huge "reds" at my left trembling from the cold. I shivered like the proverbial aspen leaf, my teeth literally chattered, and

I became numb from the knees down. It was colder than bathing in the Volga in February.

After three or four hours of freezing torture, the plane descended upon a familiar scene, and I wondered where was the famous golden dome of Meshed. When the pilot assisted me to climb from the pit I asked: "Where is the golden dome?" He informed me that we were back at Miamey. A terrific storm in the mountains had forced him to circle back to our fuelling place, and we would be obliged to spend the night in this primitive mud and clay village. The sun glowed over the frozen peaks ahead where everything looked deceptively calm and serene.

We walked stiffly over the sand and clay to the town wall, through an open space and up a winding street. Half-way up a hill we came to the two-storey house which had been pointed out to us as the governor's. I expected to find a more or less pretentious edifice. After I had climbed the stairs to the upper level I discovered that the living room had a floor of clay.

The governor, a hospitable little man, escorted us up the stairs, protesting volubly that although the government had made him a governor, it gave him no pay. He was dressed in the native rusty brown *aba* with an orange-striped sash around his waist and his hair was hennaed a frank and vivid rust colour. By way of contrast his moustache was flaming terracotta.

In honour of my presence he had a "piece of European furniture" proudly brought in—a kitchen chair—and served a most welcome and warming luncheon of meat cakes, tea and sweets. After receiving several of the local notables, we decided to walk through the town.

"Whatever you do, don't mention the word Bahá'í," warned Shakrullah. "This is one of the most fanatical towns in Persia. It is under the leadership of the mullahs and they would just as soon have us mobbed as not."

When we returned to the governor's residence, that official had prepared for our comfort by placing mattresses, which proved to be a thin pad of some sort, and a few blankets on the floor.

Talk about a mouse!

Had I only known the thoroughgoing persistence of the Miami bug—member of the tarantula clan—nothing on earth would have induced me to approach that floor. That, however, is at the end of this chapter!

After a two-hour flight, the long-sought golden dome flashed into view. We circled the city and descended to a barren waste of desert.

Numb with cold and furious with rage at the accommodations of the Air Company, I vented my wrath by threatening to write a letter to the Cairo press denouncing them. I entered the waiting motor car and, trembling, thumped out an impudent letter on my portable typewriter, heaping my fury upon the manager and the whole concern with every vigorous tap.

In the midst of this scene, which produced the sole effect of barring me from the use of the company's planes on my return journey, I found myself surrounded by a committee of joyous-looking men who had been delegated by the Bahá'i assembly to meet me. They greeted me with a cordiality that I have never before nor since experienced. With effusive expressions of joy they escorted me to an imposing house, whose high clay wall surrounded a garden, the shrubs of which, moreover, had the appearance of having just been transplanted there. It reminded me of some of the beautiful Russian Ballet scenery by Bakst.

"This, Madam, is your residence," announced the spokesman of my welcomers, as I stood at the threshold.

House and garden were thronged with men, many of them in military uniforms, one in that of a general. Never before had I seen such glowing, adoring faces; thousands of others, I was told, would come during the day to meet us.

On the right of the little reception hall was a large rectangular drawing-room, adorned with luxurious rugs and artistically draped with red velvet hangings trimmed with gold braid. On a low pearl-inlaid rosewood table stood a gleaming Persian samovar and service, steaming hot. The reception hall opened into a charming bedroom, also adorned with rugs, in which I glimpsed a bed, covered with a beautiful blue satin puff; a writing-desk,

complete for use with monogrammed stationery, and in one corner a freshly painted green box, containing a lemon tree, eight feet high, aglow with vivid yellow fruit.

Delighted, I cried out :

" Whose lovely house is this ? "

" It is your house, Madam," said the spokesman.

I was touched by this expression of hospitality, but persisted :

" Who is my host ? "

A smiling shake of the head.

" The house is yours, Madame. You are your own hostess."

Finally, I asked Shakrullah to question them. I learned that when the secretary of the Bahá'í community had received my telegram, about three o'clock the previous afternoon, he had hurriedly consulted with the Local Assembly, which had decided that I should have a house of my own ; first, because they did not wish to be so lacking in hospitality as to permit me to go to the primitive hotel, and second, because they feared that my appearance at the home of a known Bahá'í might provoke fanatic violence. They had secured this untenanted house and had actually wired it with electricity during the midnight hours. They had brought furnishings from their homes—magnificent rugs, *portières*, wardrobes, bedding, dressers, massive dining-room furniture—even to a sideboard covered with silver, and curtains for every window, not even overlooking shrubbery for my garden. They had provided a guard at the gate, the best cook in Meshed, a butler and a dozen other servants. All were members of the local Bahá'í community except the cook—a jewel whom the British Consul-General had vainly tried to acquire. Persons of prominence, merchants, government officials, military officers placed themselves at my service.

At first the landlord had refused to rent his house to Bahá'ís, but they had convinced him that I was a person of considerable importance and from America. Finally he consented on condition that they present him to me on my arrival. It was he who had brought the lemon tree.

The operator at the local telegraph station, who had transmitted my telegrams and later sent several cables abroad for me, was eager to see the "Bahá'i saint" he had heard was being visited by hundreds of thousands daily.

Seated at a long table, laden with silver dishes heaped with delicacies, and with Shakrullah at my right to act as interpreter, I offered greetings to the enthusiastic assemblage on behalf of the American and European believers. As I finished speaking to one group, they would rise, bow and file out, and another group take their place.

Subject to persecution at the hands of the mullah-inspired fanatics among whom they lived, these Persian Bahá'is hungered for some word of hope and encouragement from the great Occidental world. I told them that their sacrifices and suffering were known and appreciated, and that the Bahá'is of the United States, Canada and Europe were doing all in their power to end the atrocities, protesting to the Persian government and assuring them that the Bahá'i teachings had taken root all over the world. I told them that I had been informed the Shah was not to blame for the atrocities, but rather the ironclad ring that surrounded him.

"It is the fanatics in the bazaars that are responsible," I added, flinging what little diplomacy I possessed to the winds. "They are aroused to fanatical fury by the Bahá'is of their own stratum who, in their over-zealousness, openly flaunt their religion, thus making them appear as infidels to the ignorant."

I spoke of the encouraging interviews I had had with government officials of different countries and told them the story of the Queen of Roumania's courage and faith, expressed in her eloquent articles, which had been published in newspapers throughout the United States and Europe and which had brought the faith for which they were being persecuted to the notice of millions of people all over the globe. Queen Marie of Roumania was the first queen to accept the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh and place them side by side with those of Jesus and the other prophets who have interpreted God's meaning to man.

"In America and the West, however," I said, "the Bahá'is concentrate more on the practical side of the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh than on the mystical side as the Easterner seems prone to do. For this reason European leaders and government officials returning from Iran give the impression that Bahá'i is just another Moslem sect or schism."

I awakened in the early hours of the morning with a pricking, shooting sensation in my little finger. A lump as large as half an olive and pitted at the top like a boil which has been lanced, had formed between the third and fourth knuckles. I could not account for this until that afternoon when, at tea at the British Consulate, the prosecuting attorney, a Muhammadan, jumped up with a look of horror as I raised my tea cup and exclaimed:

"Madam, did you stop at Miami?"

"Yes," I answered. "Our plane was forced down by the storm and I slept there overnight."

"Do you realize you have been bitten by the deadly Miami bug? Have you had the antidote?"

"No."

He spoke in Persian to the British Consul-General, who without another word dashed to the telephone, called the German-American doctor at the American hospital, and arranged for me to go there at once. The surgeon looked at my finger, decided that it was too late to administer an antidote, took the name of my husband, father and mother, in a chilly, business-like manner and advised me to remain there until the fever, which usually proved fatal to Occidentals and always serious, should appear some time within five days.

After many hours, I decided that I might as well have the fever—fatal or not—in more comfortable quarters. I ordered a motor car, bolted out of the building, and drove back to my house.

When I awoke in the morning I was burning with fever and had every door and window opened wide. By night I was alternately burning and freezing. Hundreds of men were assembling in the drawing-room, before the windows and in the garden. I wrapped myself in a fur coat and continued to address them as long as my

strength endured. By eleven o'clock I could stand the strain no longer. On the verge of collapse, I went to my room and crawled into bed. I called Shakrullah, who was waiting anxiously in the hall.

"I shall send for the American doctor at once," he said.

"No, listen to me," I insisted. "Something tells me that I can outwit this situation and continue on our journey to Afghanistan. Instead of sending for the doctor, bring me a quart of the best cognac you can find and ask the assembled guests to say the healing prayers."

Startled at this command, Shakrullah nevertheless complied, returning in a short time with a bottle of "Three-Star Hennessy." A servant had fired the stove in the corner of the room into a blaze of terrific heat. I said good night and crawled under the blue satin puff, not quite sure about the morning. Lest I should become delirious during the night, Shakrullah made his bed in the hall just outside my door. Everyone was eager to render any assistance possible.

Peeping over the blue puff, I saw the leaves of my beautiful lemon tree shrivelling in the heat. By the time half the cognac was consumed I had fallen into a deep sleep, from which I awoke at four o'clock in the morning feeling as though I had melted. My gown and sheets were dripping. Shakrullah instantly responded to my call for a basin of water, which was placed before the stove by the attendant who had kept it blazing throughout the night. Quickly I bathed. As I did so, I felt that I was actually washing away the venom. My fever had completely vanished. I felt great!

Once again faith, prayer and common sense had triumphed over a poisonous death!

It may be objected that it was the brandy that effected my cure, but to this I reply that the exercise of mental and spiritual powers sometimes requires a physical means of expression. When Christ restored sight to the blind man He took clay from the ground, and spat upon it, and applied it to the eyes with a word of power. I took the cognac to put my demand behind it. I have

learned more about the laws operating through FAITH than I could comprehend at that time.

I entered the room where dozens of sympathetic callers were already waiting and announced that I had decided to leave for Birjand, then to Afghanistan or India, possibly through the Khyber Pass, depending upon the condition of the roads which were slippery as glass in the mountains, where torrents caused by melting snows roared down the precipitous sides.

CHAPTER XLI

TOWARDS AFGHANISTAN

WITH the aid of Shakrullah I obtained a seven-passenger Buick, engaged a tall, handsome chauffeur who was half-Indian and half-Persian, and set off for Birjand, armed with a shotgun, plenty of ammunition and four tins of petrol strapped to the running-boards.

In a short time we had left the fertile valley and golden mosque of Meshed far behind, had crossed a dusty, rock-strewn plain, and were winding up a precipitous camel trail. Had we actually encountered bandits, our gun would have been of small service, except for its possible moral effect, for Shakrullah kept taking pot-shots at the numerous pigeons for which this section is famous, and long before we reached our destination we had run out of cartridges.

As the trail grew steeper, tortuous and coated with ice, to my horror we passed one camel after another lying with broken legs, either dead or dying. They had slipped when rounding the icy curves and been abandoned by their owners and drivers. We passed dozens of these before we reached Birjand. One, recently fallen, sat munching at a small bundle of hay which the owner had left. If we had only saved one cartridge to put the poor creature out of its misery!

"It is the custom of the country," the chauffeur explained with an indifference hard for me to understand. As for myself, the look of mute resignation in the large brown eyes of the camel caused tears to stream from mine for most of the day.

Our journey was halted that night at a caravanserai, an indescribably dirty and disorderly huddle of wall-

enclosed sleeping-rooms, a combination of bare cells and animal enclosure within its gates.

Extract of letter to my husband :

" Here I am in Birjand, in the heart of this Asian desert, a sprawling town of eighty *farsakhs* (each *farsakh* is four miles)—south-east of Meshed and a centre of religious fanaticism which is truly revolting.

" You can laugh at my foolishness for coming here, but it has been a revelation to me to learn the manners and customs of the remote villages. I now can understand the extreme viewpoint of the Mussulman *v.* Bahá'í.

" Here, whatever is unusual or off the beaten path of tradition, is absolutely forbidden and violently opposed. Only education can alter conditions in this country so far as religion is concerned, for reason plays no more part in the daily existence than it did in ancient Britain in the days of the Christian martyrs.

" My visit to Birjand was indeed a surprise to the inhabitants.

" This ruler is an independent prince, a free-lance Emir, officially under the Shah's rule, but a ruler in fact on account of his great wealth.

" This tall, distinguished-looking man of about fifty, invited us to dine with him the evening of our arrival. He explained many things to us as we lounged in a belvedere, through whose windows I had my first glimpse of a Persian garden in winter-time.

" He was the first man in these fanatical regions to advocate education for boys and girls, which he had done twenty years ago. The mullahs fought hard with every means in their power to prevent such a contingency, but the wealth and influence of the Emir prevailed and the schools went up regardless. On one occasion, when the Bahá'ís were attacked by a fanatical mob, the Emir prevented the Bahá'í children from leaving school until the fighting had ceased, thus saving their lives. Since then there has been no active persecution.

"You can believe that it was a fanatical city when I tell you that I could find only one shopkeeper who would sell me anything—I was polluted."

Two days later we were back in Meshed, having forded the streams that gushed across the roads in the valleys. Sometimes the Indian chauffeur, who fortunately happened to be a stalwart Punjabi, was obliged to push the car through the racing water, with the help of villagers, and with me perched up on the seat—hoping and praying that the water would not reach a vulnerable spot in the engine.

After a mysterious visit to the shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Imam, in Meshed, which I was able to enter by donning a *chuddar* and posing as a Persian woman, I was happy to find myself again outside the city walls.

Before I left, a dear old poet, ninety-two years of age, presented me with an ode which he had composed in my honour. Literally translated, and with the charm of the original Persian evaporated, it ran :

"O ye friends of Khorassan. The time has come to rejoice and be gay.

"The hand-maiden from America has come into this country, come to enhearten the friends of God.

"Let us celebrate her arrival unto us bereft ones of the East, and her safe descent from the clouds.

"From our hearts we pray for her success because of her great courage. She has indeed come from out of the West in accord with the Will of God."

I was glad this spiritual man had not witnessed my outburst on landing from the aeroplane! However, his touching poem seemed a gentle reminder of the Bahá'í patience I long to achieve.

Motoring to Tihrán, I was glad the Air Company had refused me transportation. Now I could pass through the villages, see something of rural life in that province.

Our first stop was at the shrine of Omar Khayyám's birthplace, near Nishapur—a marvellous structure of tiles in bright colours and pastel shades of blue, approached by a fine avenue of trees.

Omar Khayyám is more celebrated in his native land as

an astronomer and for his standard work on algebra, written in Arabic, and other treatises than as a poet. He also ranked as the foremost mathematician of the age in which he lived.

The first tingle of spring was in the air as we arrived at the little village of Sangsar.

For some mysterious reason, the news quickly spread that a rich American Bahá'i had arrived, and I had scarcely removed the dust of twenty-hours' travel when a dozen men flocked to the caravanserai bearing almost blind children in their arms and supplicating aid. One glance at their inflamed eyelids disclosed how the combination of dust, neglect and ignorance of the elementary principles of hygiene had caused eye disease and blindness.

I immediately extracted a bottle of Elizabeth Arden eye-wash from my bag and a package of absorbent cotton, ordered the chauffeur to boil a kettle of water and soon set to work swabbing the eyes of my first patient. At least my treatment could do no harm.

The effect on the poor baby was almost immediate. Joyfully he opened his eyes which had been almost glued-shut so that he had been obliged to peep through an opening the size of a pin-head. The happy father fell on his knees before me and raised his voice to God. Like one inspired, I worked before a growing audience of awe-stricken men, women and children. I must have bathed at least thirty-five pairs of inflamed baby eyes in half an hour. Realizing that it would be impossible in the short time available to explain to these simple villagers how micro-organisms spread infection, I filled several small phials which they had brought with a diluted solution of my "precious lotion" and cautioned them thereafter to use only boiled water and cloth that had been boiled to bathe their eyes. Before we were able to shake the dust of the caravanserai from our tyres, I was besieged by nearly one hundred fathers, each bearing a tiny glass phial. These I filled with a solution of the last of my eye tonic and delivered what was probably their first lesson in sanitation and was off to Tihrán.

Disregarding the Oriental observation that only dogs—and Americans—walk in the sun, I suffered the penalty

of my scoffing carelessness by succumbing one day to a sunstroke. The wracking headache that ensued made it necessary to curtail my strenuous programme. Thus confined, I decided to recuperate in as idyllic a Persian environment as I could find. An agent rented a lovely home for me set in a rose garden with cool-shade trees and a beautiful pool stocked with goldfish.

All would have gone well in this Persian paradise had not satanic forces, in the form of a flock of crows, taken a fancy to my tallest sycamore tree and decided to visit it each morning at precisely 3.30. As punctually as a group of radio performers appearing on a sponsored coast-to-coast network, these winged demons would commence an infernal cawing that rendered sleep quite out of the question.

Eventually in desperation I instructed my gate boy to borrow a shotgun and pot the serenaders the following morning. One of the older servants, however, protested the ignorance of Westerners with such a look of combined sagacity and pity, that I asked him to suggest a better scheme. He did!

"Madame give me one dollah for dead crow. Me climb and hang him to top tree. Other crows see dead brother, stay away and never come back. You sleep like baby!"

Assuming that his knowledge of crow psychology was superior to mine, I acceded to this macabre scheme. A crow was potted and duly hung to the top branch, and that night I laid my aching brow on my pillow in the implicit confidence that at last a full eight or nine hours of uninterrupted slumber lay ahead. I was awakened, however, at not quite four o'clock by the most terrifying combination of sounds that has ever assaulted human ears. Looking through the window, I beheld, not the usual chorus of forty or fifty crows, but literally hundreds of satin, ebony-plumed creatures, whirling round and round the trees, shrieking their rage like a flock of lost souls in Dante's *Inferno*. If any crow in Tihlán was absent from this combined wake and protest meeting it was not the fault of the original sponsors. Certainly it was the best advertised avian meeting since the original

convention to select the king of birds recorded by Æsop. All through the early morning hours I tossed on my bed with a head full of pain, while this pandemonium of crows flapped and shrieked around the trees. By breakfast-time it had subsided, the concoctor of the diabolic plan shinned up the tree and removed the remains of the most memorably lamented bird since Cock Robin—and I moved.

CHAPTER XLII

VANISHING VEILS

MY admiration for the work of the "Women's International Association of Aeronautics" and the "International Council of Women," whose membership of over forty millions spans the world, is profound. As a member of these organizations I have been able to open many locked doors.

Newspapers and the powers that be had for the most part been most cordial to my efforts. The leading Tihrán newspaper featured my activities along women's active lines in a first-page story with photographs, closing with this warm-hearted sentiment: "We, on our behalf, as well as all the ladies of Persia, welcome and thank our dear sister for coming to Persia to assist us."

The Persian ladies, however, without executive experience of any kind, clearly intimated that each would like to become president, whereupon I made the suave suggestion that we should make the Queen president. Realizing the delicate situation and looking round the long table, I was inspired to propose that there could be fourteen vice-presidents. I have noticed also that the craving for distinction is a trait not infrequently observed among men. The caste system is not lacking in Persia, and they naturally wanted every appointment made according to the official rank of the husband—irrespective of their own merit and capacity, which made impossible the task of delegating offices and tasks where they would best be carried out. One meeting ended in a scene where a beautiful young matron, having returned from Europe with lofty aspirations, refused to "play" and tried to stop proceedings. Lacking a gavel, I had to pound my fist on the table to restore

order, whereupon they went home and told their husbands they had been insulted. Two of the husbands called upon me later at my hotel and asked what I really wanted them to do. To them I was able to convey a picture of the International Council and what it hoped to accomplish for the women of the world. They then advised their wives to attend the meetings and listen to my advice and suggestions. It is difficult, frequently, for women long accustomed to the role of plaything, to realize that they will gain, rather than lose, respect and love of their husbands by developing themselves and really being comrades and companions. I believe Persian men are no different from all others and sincerely desire the fullest educational opportunities for their wives. The great poet, Iraj-Mirza, who died in 1926, was a man of great feeling and talent and was known as a champion of Persian women's emancipation.

Every now and again in life we run across evidences of an identical thought blossoming out in widely separated parts of the world at the same time. To Bahá'is this is a result of the infusion of a new consciousness that always transpires with the coming of a great Prophet, a great power released into the ether by the force of the Message itself. An example of this is the great movement for the emancipation of women.

In 1847, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton commenced her campaign for the repeal of American laws containing gross injustices to women, just when at Seneca Falls she was endeavouring to organize the first conference towards securing education, the right to own property and many other advances for women, in far-off Persia, the beautiful and renowned poetess Táhirih (Kurratu'l 'Ayn) had recognized the message of the Báb and was already an active disciple. With tremendous courage in the benighted Persia of that time, she travelled from place to place, instructing Persian women in the new-found spiritual truth, prerequisite of all education. Symbolic of the freedom to come, she threw aside her veil, an unspeakable disgrace in the eyes of the orthodox of that day. Her encounters with the Moslem leaders, whom she frequently confounded with her brilliance, in

a few years built up such a hatred and fear of her power that she was finally martyred¹ by strangulation in 1852.

The middle of the nineteenth century marked the beginning in many countries of women's struggle for freedom. To-day, as the International Council and the Women's League for Peace and Freedom proves, women are becoming a stronger and stronger force in the great international affairs that are particularly their concern—such as the unity and peace of mankind, and universal education.

Even the emergence into the industrial and machine age which has made such strides since the middle of the nineteenth century has been aided by women who have invented such things as the Jacquard loom; the cotton gin; the mower and the reaper; the collar button and the sewing machine. Do not be influenced by the name in which the patents stood—frequently they were in that of the husband's!

One episode in Persia stands out in my memory. His Excellency, Teymourtashe, a modern version of a grand vizier, had invited me to go to Enzeli (now named Pahlavi) to welcome the Queen of Afghanistan to Iran, to accompany her to Resht, Kasvin, and later to Tihlán. I had not sufficient energy to take a two-days' motor journey in the terrific June heat after my severe touch of sunstroke. The aeroplane would not be leaving Tihlán until the day after the Queen's arrival at Pahlavi, and I had been going at top speed. Exasperated, I told Teymourtashe that I detested everything in Persia and would never return. He suggested that my reaction was due to the opposition of the mullahs who were ruining everything, and to the extreme heat.

Against Dr. Lotfullah's advice, I rented a large Hudson car and motored to Kasvin, following in the wake of His Excellency, Teymourtashe, who had arranged for me to meet worth-while officials in that ancient city.

¹ Lord Curzon recounted in *Persia and the Persian Question* the brutal murder of Kurratu'l 'Ayn as "one of the most affecting episodes in modern history. . . ."

After the Minister of Court had paid his courtesy call, I decided to await in Kasvin the Queen's arrival. I attended several dinners given by Bahá'is and was later escorted through narrow, winding streets and high-vaulted bazaars of the old part of Kasvin to a beautiful landscape garden. It was here that the house had stood where Kurratu 'l 'Ayn had been born, and it was here she had been led to her martyrdom in Tíhrán.

By the time the royal procession arrived in Kasvin, I, a woman alone, had become notorious through my activities. Although I had been invited to be a member of the reception committee, a local dignitary and one of the directors of the affair, held different ideas and refused to permit me to attend the reception of their majesties. He overcame his scruples sufficiently to allow me to enter the palace "Ali Qapu" gardens, but made it clear to me that the nearest a foreigner would be permitted to approach the Afghan rulers would be the balcony in the palace gardens. From this place I would be allowed to watch their approach.

He gave me a permit which granted the privilege of crossing the wide avenue edged by trees. The palace had been closed to pedestrians and blocked off by soldiers and mounted police in splendid regalia. Half an hour before the scheduled arrival of the royal entourage, I was strolling leisurely towards the Ali Qapu Palace along the blockaded avenue when the royal procession swung into view. The lone pedestrian on the wide avenue attracted the attention of the Afghan king, who was driving beside Teymourtashe. When the car drew near, the King said loudly enough for me to hear :

"Isn't that the wife of the Russian Ambassador to Germany?"

Teymourtashe turned towards me, bowed profusely, and quite audibly replied :

"Why, no. That is the representative of the International Council of Women, of whom I have been speaking to Her Majesty."

The moment the procession entered the palace gate, I scribbled on one of my cards :

"To Teymourtashe. Is it convenient?" and handed it to an attendant. Three minutes later the Afghan minister's secretary came to me with a card, on which Teymourtashe had written:

"H.M. the Queen will receive you at 6.30."

I looked at my wrist-watch. It was a quarter to six.

As I headed for the royal reception-room, the dignitary referred to earlier passed me. I am afraid I smiled at him with acidulous sweetness.

In the meantime, Teymourtashe, who had been chatting with a group of Afghan and Persian ministers, strode up and shook hands so imperiously that some inward imp tempted me to shock him. I asked:

"You will interpret for me with Her Majesty?"

He could not have looked more horrified had Charlie Chaplin suddenly sneaked up and aimed a gooseberry pie at him.

"Most certainly not!" he replied. "I cannot be an interpreter!"

"Oh, come now, Your Excellency," I wheedled. "Remember, it is for a Queen."

He laughed nervously and in a rather embarrassed manner replied:

"No, I cannot. I will find an interpreter for you." So he arranged with the secretary of the King of Afghanistan to do the interpreting.

I was presented to the attractive Queen, whose resemblance to the beautiful actress Jane Cowl startled me. She received me graciously, and invited me cordially to the reception. During an interesting dialogue, I could see that the interpreter was antagonistic to the subject under discussion and was attempting to steer the conversation into any other channel than that of women's freedom and advancement. Not caring for a battle of wits, I therefore retired.

Early the following morning the entire party started for Tihrán. Great excitement was felt when it became known that the Queen was travelling unveiled.

I shared the general surprise, recalling a conversation I had had with Teymourtashe.

A few days before, Mme Sirdar Bahadur, wife of the Minister for War, had invited me to tea. While there, I was called to the 'phone by Madame Teymourtashe. Her husband wished to see me at once on a matter of importance.

He told me that the Afghan king had telegraphed his minister at Tihrán, and later had sent two special emissaries to report on the possibility of his Queen travelling in Persia unveiled. Being Moslem and learning of the mullahs' threats to make a public demonstration against the Queen's unveiling in a Moslem country, the Afghanistan officials naturally presented the King with a pessimistic picture of their reception in Persia. Not satisfied with their reports, however, the King had telegraphed the Persian court for advice on the matter. The Shah had been told by Teymourtashe that I disapproved of unveiling before an education programme had been put into effect that would prepare all Persian women for their anticipated freedom. Accordingly, Teymourtashe wished now to consult me about this definite problem.

"What is your opinion?" he asked.

"I do not believe that the time has come for the women of Afghanistan or Persia to remove their veils, even if permission were granted," I replied. "If the Queen of Afghanistan comes here unveiled it will help Persian women considerably, but she will find that in her own backward country it will be quite another matter. Meanwhile a new system of education for the women of Persia should be established before official unveiling."

"What then shall we reply to the King of Afghanistan?" asked Teymourtashe. "The King is *en route* via Russia."

"Send him a wire saying, 'Do not advise arrive unveiled,'" I replied.

The telegram was written, but whether it was ever sent would be too extravagant a guess.

The attractive Queen wore a smart French suit and jaunty turban with grace and charm—and throughout her visits her taste in dress was impeccable.

Later history would seem to indicate that enthusiasm

overcame wisdom in matters of modern education. Afghanistan responds slowly to the changes of progress. Their Majesties' pace was too rapid for their subjects. High political jinks ensued. The fruits of their well-intentioned efforts were revolt, tragedy and flight.

CHAPTER XLIII

SKY WAYS

"I SHOULD like to fly to India," I told some friends in London one evening at the Savoy. Up to this time no passengers had yet flown there, but I had heard rumours in America that such a flight was contemplated. It was in the hope of fulfilling this desire that I had sailed for England. I had travelled to Portugal with my friend, Miss Martha Root, left her in Lisbon and proceeded to the Canary Isles, but still without the slightest indication that my dream of flying to the Orient would ever come true. Still if you "hold a thought long enough" it is bound to be translated in the world of action.

The morning after expressing my wish at the Savoy I went to Cook's to make reservations for air passage to France, and steamer accommodations to Egypt and India. An Imperial Airways' plane, I was informed, was leaving Croydon the following morning at six o'clock (December 19th, 1926) on a trial flight to Egypt to gauge the fuel and gather data for the forthcoming tour of Sir Samuel and Lady Hoare to India. And they were willing to take one or two passengers. The opportunity had come! By paying approximately the same transportation fare as for steamer passage, I could fly to Egypt in a plane with three pilots, one radio operator and a mechanic. It did not take me long to make up my mind and the following morning found me comfortably settled, ready for the first part of my journey.

The plane rose over Croydon, headed straight for the Channel and descended at Dijon in time for luncheon. Immediately thereafter we took off for Marseilles, flying at an average speed of one hundred and twenty miles an hour, and soon leaving the fast express train from Paris

far behind. Sometimes we reached an altitude of six thousand feet. Within five hours we arrived Marseilles. We stayed that night at a small hotel at the aerodrome. Here I learned from the pilot that another plane, also heading for Cairo and containing Sir Sefton Brancker and the wife of some London air official, had left the day before but, due to a storm over Lyon, had been forced down. By flying over the top of the storm our pilot had beat the other plane to Marseilles. Anxious to best them further and be the first air passenger to arrive at Cairo, I urged our pilot to greater speed.

At dawn the next morning we departed for Pisa. Daylight crept over the mountain range behind us as we flew into the rising sun. Snow-capped Mount Remo glistened to the left and beneath us the cobalt blue Mediterranean gleamed like a jewelled carpet. This tideless sea has always held a great fascination for me.

We swept over Cannes and ten minutes later passed over Monte Carlo. We flew as high as eight thousand feet during this part of the journey, then descended near the leaning tower of Pisa to lunch with officers and members of the Italian air force.

Flying over Rome proved the thrill of a lifetime. The appearance of the Coliseum from the air beggared description. An Egyptian and an English Reuter correspondent, "last minute" passengers, were exchanging enthusiastic comments on the panorama spread out below, when a sudden sideswoop of the plane almost pitched us through the windows and into the Forum. Fortunately—(although we did not learn it until later) we were being piloted by one of Great Britain's greatest pilots, Captain Raymond Hinchliffe. On my portable I wrote an enthusiastic description in mid-air, then turned on my small Peter Pan gramophone so that Gounod's Ave Maria sounded above the even purring of three great engines in a pæan of victory.

Soaring southward over the sunny pastoral countryside dotted with towns and vineyards, we saluted a familiar friend from a novel angle—the smoking monster Vesuvius! Many times I had slowly ascended the side of old Vesuvius, but now I was flying at a terrific

speed over this great volcano, actually looking down into that sinister opening in the earth's surface and watching the molten flame-coloured lava bubbling like a great kettle of fire.

After circling Vesuvius twice we flew over the Straits of Messina to Catania, Sicily, over many beautiful vineyards. After lunching in Catania with the Air Force in the outlying aerodrome, we headed for the open sea, the little jewelled towns rapidly disappearing from sight. Straight we flew to Malta, and landed one hour and thirty minutes later in Valetta, escorted part of the way by two Italian hydroplanes. Our De Haviland Hercules was the last word in comfort, but was not a hydroplane, its seafaring facilities consisting of only a charming little rubber life-boat not much larger than a baby's bassinet.

At Malta the plane carrying Sir Sefton Brancker overtook us and both pilots agreed to start together the next morning at six o'clock. Our own car being too full of paraphernalia, our pilot asked his friendly rival to bring along my luggage, which contained everything I had except my vanity case. When we arrived at the aerodrome we found both tyres flat. What our pilot said and thought is better left unsaid. The other party soon arrived and the plane made a speedy get-away and, stung by our disappointment, we decided, after the tyres had been repaired, to make a race to Africa and overtake it. While flying over the Mediterranean, Captain Hinchliffe passed a note to me which the radio operator had just received from the other plane: "You had better turn back, I'm awfully sorry, but I forgot your passenger's luggage!" Was I furious! Captain Hinchliffe suggested going back, but I insisted "Nothing of the kind! I will do without my luggage! But we'll beat them!"

At this moment a package dropped on my head from the rack above me.

"What in the world is this?" I asked.

"Some new fur aviator caps for the pilot of the other plane," explained one of the pilots.

I opened the window and dropped the package into

the gleaming Mediterranean. When instantly, but alas ! too late, I realized the heinousness of such an act.

Not a single seagoing craft could be seen as we soared serenely on toward Africa, sometimes as low as one hundred and fifty feet so that the fish were plainly visible in the water. After two hours and fifty minutes of flying through a sunny sky, we landed at Homs, on the edge of the Italian Libyan desert. There was tremendous excitement among the Arabs at this station as they filled the great tanks of our plane with petrol strained through chamois skins. We lunched on board the plane, then were off again, this time over the sandy waste where the Senussi reigns supreme. Captain Hinchliffe flew high enough to be out of gun range, but low enough for us to watch the tribes assemble in almost the twinkling of an eye—chickens, sheep, camels, rushing in every direction, Senussi on great horses dashing about, their *burnouses* and red *kaffihs* flying in the wind. They levelled their rifles in our direction but we soared high in the air, racing at one hundred and forty miles an hour, fearful lest our great flying monster might descend and destroy them.

Sollum, Africa, was our next landing place. From there we flew to Bengazi, where to my utter surprise, when the British Consul appeared, he proved to be the same Mr. Palmer, formerly Consul at Damascus, who had taken me on his exploration trip across the Syrian Desert to Baghdád. The other plane had just arrived at Bangazi, and the two pilots, Captain Hinchliffe and Captain Douglas, conspired together to produce some champagne from the tail of the plane, and in the desert, in the grateful shade of the wing of the H66, we celebrated this delightful chance meeting in the desert in regal style !

The Italian Governor cabled Malta to have my luggage forwarded to Shepherd's at Cairo, and then entertained us, after which at two gay receptions we flew straight for the great Pyramids. We had plenty of time to swoop over the Pyramids twice, close enough to see people standing on the top, to leisurely salute the Sphinx and yet land at Heliopolis—ancient city of the sun and

modern airport of Cairo—well ahead of the other plane—the first air passengers to fly from England to Egypt!

We arrived at twilight, winners of the race, to face a battery of press photographers. New Year's Eve, and me without even a toothbrush! I had just one hour to go to Ave Sherin Pasha and find a complete outfit for the New Year's Ball at Shepherd's, where I spent a gala evening with the winner of the race, Captain Hinchliffe.

"What would you do with international civilization and a bunch like those wild Senussi?" he asked.

"Teach them first that the neighbouring world is their friend, not their enemy."

"Wouldn't you like to do the first bit of pioneering?"

"Nothing I'd like better—but how?"

"I know," was his sudden inspiration. "I know—let us print a message like that to them in Arabic and then fly over and drop showers of the leaflets down."

"They all love colour even though they hate and fear people. We can have your neighbourly message printed on paper of every shade and hue. If they are unable to read they will paste the colourful leaflets on the walls of their huts. They are said to do this with anything they find handy, including torn pages from the Koran. Who knows but that their subconscious minds might absorb the idea even though they cannot read with their eyes."

We had drifted from banter to serious thought. Most men who pass their lives in the great expanses of sea, land and air share the feeling of man the microbe versus the awe of the universe. Suddenly he leaned forward and asked me a great question:

"What *is* the matter with Christianity? The Church will kick up a lot of dust before it will countenance this forward stride!"

I did my best to explain historical proofs of the great cycles of spiritual force in the world that brought about each successive civilization like pearls strung upon invisible thread, each civilization following the inevitable law of all things—birth, growth, maturity, decay and disintegration of *form*, so that the spirit might renew its expression in a higher form of life—for us

to-day the fourth-dimensional era, that will brook no quarrel between science and religion any more than between matter and spirit. I sketched the cycle that is speedily coming to a close, the Adamic cycle from Adam to Bahá'u'lláh, who has ushered in "a new cycle of human power" which explains new laws of greater magnitude and scope, and the reason why science has reached an impasse. Three-dimensional science seems to have come upon an invisible wall, upon which stands an ominous stop-and-go signal that spells "Halt." History also proves that man-made institutions evaporate as mist before the sun when they batter against God's immutable purpose. Bahá'u'lláh has said that science will bridge this gap and that the "whole contingent world is subject to a law and rule which it can never disobey; even man is forced to submit to death and sleep and other conditions—that is to say, man in certain particulars is governed—and necessarily these governed ones must have a governor."

Bahá'i writings state that "when the atom is properly analysed, its component parts will be found to be operating according to the same law governing the revolution of planets. That every fixed star has its own planets, every planet its own creatures." Everybody knows that Milliken split the atom. My personal secretary, graduate of the University of California, saw the atom split when she produced photographic evidence of this phenomenon, as she clicked the little shutter of her camera which was used for the great experiment made by Professor Milliken.

According to Jeans. "Mankind is at the very beginning of its existence . . . and has only just begun to notice the cosmos outside of itself. It is hardly likely to interpret its surroundings aright in the first new moments its eyes are open."

No amount of "dust-kicking" can block the path in the onward march of evolution.

Through the dynamic, far-reaching establishment of the Bahá'i Dispensation a new world is being born—a great synthesis of world autonomy and its accompanying theocratic system of government based on oneness.

Hinchliffe was thoughtful.

So am I. I shall always remember his numerous and unusual questions.

This between-dance conversation is memorable.

The next afternoon, following a camel jaunt from the Pyramids to old Memphis, he announced his intention to fly the Atlantic.

"I should like to be the first woman to fly the Atlantic from Europe."

"You can be—I would like to have you as a mascot. I will cable you when the machine is ready."

The trip to Memphis caused him to miss his boat, whereupon he decided to take the train to Haifa that night and consult Shogi Effendi. Something came up unexpectedly and he took the first steamer to England.

He kept his word and the cable found me in Vienna with my husband. I had been watching the newspaper reports of Hinchliffe's preparation, delays in completion of the plane and doubts that the weather should hold.

"You can go anywhere else you like, but you are not going to fly the Atlantic, and that's that!" quoth my incomparable friend husband.

Excellent advice, little appreciated until the Hinchliffe tragedy made front-page headlines.

Neither of my three zeppelin thrills can detract from the glorious experience of that first aeroplane journey toward the land of my dreams.

Until June 26th, 1936, zeppelin travel held no attraction for me. My first crossing was brought about by a problem of time. My husband accepted a pressing invitation to give a series of lectures at the Bahá'í Summer School at Geyserville, California. This would take him west about the time of my arrival in New York by steamer. Why not speed up ocean travel, I thought, and save four days, thus arriving in time for a visit with him. It did not take long to make up my mind since it would mean another month before my husband would return to Maine, our summer home in Green Acre.

I flew to Frankfort from Budapest where I was at the moment, made all arrangements, flew to London, back to Paris, then a leap back to Frankfort, arriving on the 29th ready to start. All passengers gathered in the lounge of the "Frankfurterhof" at four-thirty to attend to such items as passports and luggage. It commenced to rain at tea-time, but by ten o'clock in the evening, the time scheduled for our departure for the aerodrome, wind blew and the sky blackened above a downpour. Simultaneously word was received that the Hindenburg would not leave until five o'clock in the morning. Passengers were standing about the lobby and some had already retired when a second message came from Commander Lehman suggesting that passengers who did not care to rise early could sleep on board in the hangar.

I knew nothing whatsoever about zeppelins. My fancy led me to believe that the giant fish was filled with gas and that passengers were accommodated in the little cars that hung on the outside of the great blimp, which turned out to be Diesel engines, and in the little ship that hung suspended beneath its nose. I was shortly to be disillusioned on this score, for when I stepped into the hangar I mutely gazed at people ascending a flight of steps into the very bowels of the great monster that towered over me. I walked twice round the gigantic 820-foot mystery feeling about the size of an ant waiting to be devoured. Literally fascinated I ascended the metal staircase and entered its amazing interior. At the head of the flight of steps, two stewards were waiting to relieve me of anything like matches or cigarette-lighter, politely explaining that the smoking-room was equipped for such requirements and matches were strictly forbidden. In a daze I followed another steward up another flight of stairs; looking back over my shoulder I could see through the glass floor attendants below hurriedly piling up sand bags. At the head of the second stairway I found myself face to face with the great Von Hindenburg's bronze bust imperiously resting in a niche in the panelled wall of the corridor. Then to my stateroom, where, to

my supreme astonishment, I stood in a carpeted room with black and chromium table, cream coloured eider-down puff on the bed, an ivory basin that almost came off the wall at my touch, but which proved to be made of celluloid. The door, panelled in some fine mauve material, opened and shut at the slightest pressure of one finger, reminding me of rice-paper doors in Japan. There are no air-conditioned mattresses on any steamer to compare with my bed on that air palace.

The next discovery was the baby-grand piano covered with fine beige-coloured leatherette in a corner of the general lounge, a long room running along one side of the ship facing a row of windows the entire length of the lounge and the writing-room. Modernistic furnishings and panelled walls decorated with air routes from pole to pole were the background. I accidentally brushed against what looked to be a heavy chromium-plated steel chair beautifully upholstered in monks' cloth, but discovered it was made of aluminium. To the opposite side of the ship, I followed the rust-coloured, chemically-treated carpet into the dining-room. Its walls were in pastel shades depicting all the denizens of the deep sporting along its length in imaginary waters. Its chairs and inset lounging window seats were artistically done in smart terracotta coloured material. Tables set with gleaming silver and tall slender silver vases filled with pink roses completed the room. I lifted one vase certain that it must be leaded at the base. Surprised that it was not, I wondered what would happen when the ship rose from the ground. I decided to snatch a few hours' sleep before taking off at daybreak. Three hours later I was awakened by the distant hum of engines and hurried to the dining-room. Dawn was creeping over the misty fields as the great ship rose graceful as a swan and moved over the Rhine toward Cologne. Windows were crowded with passengers sipping coffee as we floated past the magnificent spires of the great cathedral. Breakfast was scarcely over when we passed over Amsterdam, looking down at its unique rows of buildings with oblong courts which ran down the centre of each. Over

England toward the Irish Channel in time for luncheon, then dinner on the Atlantic. Most of the passengers retired early after a day crammed full of exciting experiences and thrills. Of course, there were a few blasé critters on board who complained about the food not being English or American—one such detriment sat through the entire six meals eating bread and butter and wearing a look of contempt, while the other passengers dined sumptuously on roast venison or boiled beef with horse-radish sauce. The steward roused me about six o'clock the second morning, announcing our approach to the southern tip of "Greenland's Icy Mountains" as we tore over the ocean at one hundred and eighty miles an hour. Labrador loomed into view about luncheon time, and with the aid of binoculars we watched a bear dash to shelter as the great hulk cast its shadow upon the ground and snow. By dinner time we were gliding swiftly up the St. Lawrence River, past waving throngs on the famous broad-walk along the front of the Château Frontenac Hotel at Quebec City.

Strains from Wagner's Lohengrin drew me toward the lounge, where charming Commander Lehman, seated at the piano, looked up from his only relaxation and said: "We will pass close to Montreal. How would you like to drop down over your home?" Too astonished for words, I was able to say: "I thought this was a record crossing." He laughed and added: "Oh, that was accomplished hours ago. We have been travelling at the rate of two hundred or more miles an hour since noon; besides, we must save something for news on the next crossing. Go down and tell Captain Pruss to take you over your house if you think you can locate it." I dashed through the bar to the cat-walk and sent a radio to my husband, then down the ladder to the pilot ship that hung beneath the nose of the ship. With the aid of binoculars I sighted the lighted Cross on Mount Royal. As I pointed to the mountain Captain Pruss called out directions to officers in the rear of the cabin and before I could count twenty the ship had reached St. Catherine Boulevard, dropped low and

careened about as easily as though it were some toy balloon. As the famous Hindenburg threw its focused lights on the astonished pedestrians all traffic halted on the streets below. Circling along the snake-like Boulevard we dropped quite low over my home where I could plainly see its lighted windows and the tail-lights of motor cars in front of the house. We turned as quickly as we came and headed back toward the St. Lawrence much to the astonishment of the members of my household. Shortly after midnight, as we sat leisurely munching sandwiches, we reached New York City. A few seconds later we were gliding up the Hudson to the tooting of motor horns and ferry sirens, then drifted about over Central Park and almost touched the tower of the Barbizon-Plaza. We circled around the Great White Way, along Fifth Avenue, and headed for Lakehurst where we hung suspended till the crew and customs officers came on duty at five o'clock in the morning. We made the first flying mooring without so much as a tremor.

My husband had left for Chicago, I learned at our New York office, so I telegraphed Chicago, had my hair waved and took the first plane out of New York and dined with my husband that evening. He had not received my radiogram. The housekeeper knew that my husband did not approve of zeppelins so hesitated to forward the radio to his train. When he received my wire from New York that I would dine with him that evening he was literally nonplussed and decided it was some practical joke, for the last he had heard of me I was in Budapest, resting after a long lecture tour through the Orient and the Balkans.

When we met a very curious psychological incident took place. He said he felt it was very dangerous for me to travel by zeppelin, and we had quite an argument about its safety. He told me that he was taking the "Chief," the latest innovation in express trains, for the west, and began enthusiastically recounting the virtues and speed of this remarkable streamlined train. I became extremely concerned for his safety, and entreated him not to run such risk of being killed on such a swift

moving train which might easily jump the tracks. We argued back and forth about this danger, then he finally said :

"Well, Einstein is right. All is relative. I fear for you on the zeppelin, and you fear for me on a modern train. We are both just modern, and each chooses a certain brand of expression of this modernity." So he went by the streamlined express, and I worried all the way to New York on the aeroplane.

Three months later I took the Hindenburg and had my greatest adventure. It was the Hindenburg's last crossing for that year, to Europe. We were riding through the air serenely when my attention was attracted by a strange phenomenon—it was night and we were skirting a tornado that looked like a giant corkscrew twirling and swirling between the sky and the surging waves. It was like some strange movie thriller, because we moved alternately through clouds and azure skies between peeps at the raging sea below us. The clouds parted over England about two o'clock in the morning and we marvelled at the lighted cities that looked like mammoth jewelled octopi with their winding and twisting streets leading out from a central point.

As the clouds parted I had the sensation of looking down on a disc with a complete horizon round it, as though from the fourth-dimensional world. I seemed to see it as the Dot which projected itself into the Line that became the Plane which had projected itself into a Cube of the first, second and third dimensions of length, breadth and depth. The fourth dimension was projecting itself in every direction into the great expanse of Time and Space. I saw the world, not as one belonging to it, but as one looking at it—this world of people who were thinking in terms of their little three-dimensional universe from which I had graduated into the great Cosmic world of new ways of thinking, new ways of living, new knowledge about how that moving disc below should be governed. I had an intense desire to put forth my hand and pick off the man-made boundary lines that separated the nations of one human family, divided and cut up like a cross puzzle, which

must needs be put together again by the hands of the creatures who had caused the divisions. Up there in the great mystery of Time, Space and Universal Energy, I felt I had glimpsed my first lesson in geometry and the fourth dimension that eludes even the greatest of modern scientists. It was a spiritual world, an entirely new world, that must be realized by the teeming millions that crawl about below on the cube.

CHAPTER XLIV

UNEXPECTED

A MOST brilliant conversation was taking place at the luncheon at Haifa on my last visit in June, when I suddenly remembered that I had forgotten to have my passport *visé'd* for Egypt. A lecture had been arranged for the following evening at Alexandria. There was nothing to do but to go to Jerusalem to take care of the *visé* and, having missed the day's plane, would have to take the slow journey by train.

During luncheon someone had entered the dining-room and placed a copy of *Babā'u'lláh and the New Era* on the table beside Shoghi Effendi—who handed it to me. It had been translated into the Abyssinian language and was fresh from the press in Egypt. I suggested that I give it to Emperor Haille Salassie, whom the newspapers said had fled to Palestine.

It was dark as pitch when I arrived and, due to the Arab strike which had entered its fourth week, not a taxi operating in the city. I walked gingerly up the hill to the King David Hotel. The first thing I did was to inquire about the Emperor, only to be told that he had moved to a villa a short distance away, and had refused to see some three hundred people during the past few hours. The hotel manager advised that the curfew had rung—and that it was not safe to go into the street.

The hotel taxi-driver likewise assured me that I would not get past the gate no matter what sort of credentials I might have, adding: "Yesterday I drove exactly sixty-two persons to call upon him—all were refused admittance!"

Undaunted, I rang the bell, after calling upon the Eternal Knower of all things—an Abyssinian servant

instantly thrust a large key into the gate lock. I turned and asked the sceptical driver to say in Arabic: "Madam wishes to see the Emperor's physician." He complied and the gate swung open with a polite gesture to enter. I passed through, dashing past the purple bougainvilleæ covered walls and up the twisting steps as one fleeing an enemy. I had but thirty-two minutes to make the Imperial Airways' plane where I was to address a large audience at Alexandria that evening.

I collided with the little Greek housemaid who sent my message to the doctor. In my most naïve manner I asked if the Emperor was at home. No, he was out! I sat down in the reception-hall and was just finishing an inscription in the book when I heard a sound and turned to find that the front door had opened noiselessly and the Emperor, the Empress, and the pretty Princess had entered followed by the children in their proper order. I probably was more surprised than the Emperor, who stood wide-eyed, presumably wondering how this interloper had crashed his gate. I took his hand as he graciously stepped toward me, and said: "I am one of your millions of sympathizers. I have brought you a book, hoping that within its pages Your Majesty may find the peace and serenity that it brought to Queen Marie of Roumania. It has been translated by one of your subjects at Addas Ababa, whom I expect to meet this evening in Egypt."

He smiled and took a large new gold piece from his pocket and said: "Keep this in appreciation of your thoughtfulness." Naturally I turned it about in my hand, and as I did so he said: "Most people ask for my photograph, but I am on this coin." The little Princess added in flawless English: "It is pure gold, and there is no alloy in it." Again I turned the heavy coin, delighted with the gift. The little Princess must have been told while in England that some Americans are from "Missouri," for she added: "It is worth about four pounds."

I inquired from whence she had learned such perfect English. She informed me in a most sophisticated voice:

"Oh, I was educated in England."

The Emperor had returned from the Mount of Olives where he had placed his affairs in Higher Hands. His gracious manner, his sad smile, his deep reverence toward his Creator are qualities that go into the composition of all true noblemen. I never saw the doctor. I wonder what he thought.

I begged the Emperor's pardon for the intrusion and literally flew down the stucco steps, bounced into the taxi, and in a split second was speeding toward the aerodrome.

CHAPTER XLV

MODERN CRUSADERS

CHRISTMAS DAY in Berlin, in the gaily decorated Adlon Hotel, near the lighted tree, shedding an illumination on the table where I sat with Paul Peroff, the Russian scientist and mathematician. Light sparkled on his silver pencil as he swiftly penned the following for *Sunburst*:

"No matter from what standpoint we consider the present world's crisis, a logical and impartial investigation is bound to disclose that the roots of it are located deep down in the very recesses of the human soul. There, in the secret depth, the real struggle is taking place, a struggle between God and Devil for the possession of human spirit, and the eruptions caused by this struggle are being manifested all over the world. They are taking the forms of economical crises, political commotion or an open war.

"No matter what the EXTERIOR results of this struggle may be, the real result will be established by the outcome of this INTERIOR struggle. The battle will determine which shall declare victory, the spiritual or the material human being—and upon this decision will rest the fate of humanity for many years to come.

"In the frightful crash of this struggle, in the great events, of which we are the terrified witnesses, in blood and hate, in treachery and heroic deeds, in victories and defeats a New World conception is being born, a new temple of human consciousness is being raised. In place of worn-out traditions—new conceptions are being created; new foundations are being built where the old ones have collapsed. Humanity suddenly awakening in a crumbling building seems only now aware of the fact that this building had stood thousands

of years without repairs, that it is old, shabby, insecure from the cellar to the roof. That periodical coat of paint, known to history as periods of renaissance, could not fill up the deep crevices any more, could not reinforce the crumbling walls and the badly washed-out base of all these scientific and religious teachings upon which the human world conceptions are being reared. A complete revival is needed. There must be a radical revision of the relations which exist, according to our belief, between man and God.

"A quest for Truth is the aim of human knowledge. Two roads are leading to it—the road of Religion and the road of Science. It does not mean that there are two Truths—a religious and a scientific one. The existence of two roads to ONE truth is the result of a peculiar property of human mind which perceives the world only as divided upon Matter and Spirit. We do not perceive a United world, but always one divided upon measurable and unmeasurable Time, Space and Causality; this peculiarity of human perception had been known from times immemorial and is the cause of the dualism traceable through all of the religious and philosophical systems. Maya and Brahman of the ancient Hindu, Matter and Form of Aristotle, the World of Ideas and the World of Things of Plato, the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of men in Christianity.

"Immanuel Kant gave us a metaphysical explanation of such duality: by bringing into United (noumenal) world, his Divided Forms of Perception, Man HIMSELF divides Time upon past and future, Space—upon three dimensional and many dimensional one, Causality—upon cause and effect. Therefore, this Maya, this World of Things, this kingdom of men, this "phenomenal" world of Kant. All that we accept as our physical Universe—is a world created by the peculiarity of human Forms of perception. We are like a man going up in an elevator who divides the building upon the upper—"future"—floors and the lower—"past"—ones, while the building is ONE and Undivided until the elevator had started to move. We are like a man in a speeding car who, through his own motion, creates a

movement in a MOTIONLESS landscape, making the trees dash by, the roads, rivers and streets turn and twist in the most unnatural way. Only by looking out through the window of his car can he see the motionless landscape slowly fading away.

"Now, here is a question. Is it possible to look out of this material Universe of ours, out of the Forms of perception into which every phenomenon is encompassed as far as our knowledge is concerned? No, says Hindu. No, says Plato. No, says Christianity. No, says Kant. But, strange as it may seem, the modern science says—YES.

"It is possible to get OUT of our Forms of perception because these Forms are not FINAL, but—CONDITIONAL, i.e. are subject to EVOLUTION. If therefore it were possible to establish a PART of this evolution, we could calculate the whole of it, as an astronomer calculates the distances of the stars lying outside of his immediate perception. Science which investigates the relations existing between three dimensional and many dimensional space and between Time and Causality as manifested in our phenomenal world is called Metaphysical Geometry. It is therefore a Geometrical structure in which our intuitive perceptions and our experimental knowledge are combined into a Cosmical Scheme.

"It is impossible, of course, to dwell longer on this subject in a short article. Metaphysical Geometry requires study, although anyone with a school knowledge of Mathematics, Natural History and Astronomy could comprehend it. Suffice to say that the very possibility for looking out of the Forms of perception has been created by the same Theories of modern science which had realised the thousand-year dream of humanity and discovered the 'philosophical stone' that not only turns quicksilver into gold, but matter into energy as well. I am speaking of discovery of the Electron and of the theories connected with this discovery.

"The meaning of these theories in the field of experimental knowledge is already recognized in every branch of science, but their meaning for intuitive knowledge has not been even sounded. But new horizons are opened

by Religion and Philosophy, which deal with Unmeasurable Space (the Kingdom of God); with Unmeasurable Time (Future Existence), and with Unmeasurable Causality (God), the "First Cause" of the Theory of Relativity, of Subatomical energy, of Quantum and others. While the scientific discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin brought about a rupture between Science and Religion, the discoveries made in our time must build a bridge over this rupture and unite Science and Religion.

"Spirituality," according to Professor Milliken, "is no longer limited to religion. It is a Scientific force." A force, that is back of human progress, of that expansion of human Forms of perception which made us aware of the existence of the Spiritual World. We have overgrown our physical Universe. We are OUTSIDE of its limits. The three dimensional space is not sufficient any more to hold all that we perceive in the Universe. 'It is by looking into our own nature,' says Professor A. Eddington, 'that we first discover the failure of the physical Universe to be co-extensive with our experience of reality.'"

We are standing upon the threshold of a NEW conception of the world. Thanks to the teaching of such a prophet as Bahá'u'lláh and such scientists as Professors Milliken, Eddington and Jeans there is no longer such ignorance. This world is NOT given to men—it is being CREATED by them. By gradual expansion of the forms of perception the men begin to see more and more of the endless Cosmos, thus expanding the phenomenal universe, accessible to their perception.

The real meaning of modern discoveries to humanity had not been fully understood as yet. The meaning is this: Man has reached a mature age. The phantoms of Matter and Spirit do not trouble and do not frighten him any more. He refuses now to repeat with Socrates: "Only one thing I know, and that is that I know nothing." In course of these two thousand five hundred years he had learned a great deal. And this knowledge puts his relation to his Creator upon a new basis. In the period of man's infantile ignorance God was to him a terrible Lord whom one MUST fear and obey. In man's

youthful age God appeared to him as the Merciful Father whose bounties are to be begged through love and prayer. In our time, in man's mature age God appears to him as Universal Reason, the laws of which must be studied, understood and obeyed.

There is a Cosmical Process that is going on without beginning and without end. The aim of it is an EXPANSION of the Universe. Life is not a "by-product" of this process, but the very ESSENCE of it. Any living organism is an instrument through which this process is being manifested in Time, Space and Causality. The purpose of man's existence, therefore, is to do his part in this process of expansion by transforming MATTER into SPIRIT, that is a lower form of space into a higher one. By creating his world of appearances the man creates a form of space which moves in Time to become a higher form. It is up to the man himself to see that his world of appearances WILL become a higher form of space than the one out of which it has been created. This is THE purpose of life in general and is the purpose of man's existence. By adjusting himself to the Cosmical Process, to this Universal DRIFT, the man is carried with it through eternity, or is being left in the back-waters. By taking his part in the work of God or by neglecting it—he creates his own salvation, or his destruction.

Man steps out of the divided Space, divided Time and divided Causality into the World of Oneness. He steps into the Universe of eternal, motionless Truths conscious of his duty towards his Creator, conscious of the greatness of that road, which he has yet to travel, conscious of his responsibility for every step he takes.

"The curtain rises up for the next act of the Universal Drama. We like actors, who have played their part, must leave the stage, taking with us our only possession, which is our redemption and our hope—the consciousness of an honestly played part."

What a splendid crusader he looked, tall and distinguished, with five hundred years of Slavic ancestors, with a spirit of fire, and an air of nobility of birth and intellect. He is the author of *Three Dimensional Shadows*, about to be published, in which he admits that the

Message of Bahá'u'lláh is the only spiritual teaching in the world that can stand the cold, analytical Roentgen rays of metaphysical geometry.

I cannot help but feel that his book will become a bridge across which one may find the long-looked-for link between science and religion. This may be the welding of the two highways of search into one great illumined pathway on which mankind may walk without resistance.

An outstanding crusader was Dr. Auguste Forel, the famous Swiss scholar, psychologist and humanitarian, a world authority on the ant. At the age of seventy-two he became a Bahá'i when he learned that Bahá'u'lláh years ago had formulated a definite scheme for a world commonwealth such as his own soul had envisioned.

"The world organization of the nations is inevitable," he said to me when I paid him a visit at Yvonne, Switzerland, "ultimately there will be a world state, a universal language, and a universal religion. The Bahá'i Movement is in my estimation the greatest movement to-day working for brotherhood and universal peace."

Dr. Forel's will contains the following statement :

"En 1920 seulement j'ai appris à connaître, à Karlsruhe, la religion supra-confessionnelle et mondiale des Bahá'is fondée en Orient par le Persan Bahá'u'lláh il y a seventy ans. C'est la vraie religion du bien social humain, sans dogmes, ni prêtres, reliant entre eux tous les hommes sur notre petit globe terrestre. Je suis devenu Bahá'i. Que cette religion vive e prospère pour le bien de l'humanité; c'est là mon vœu le plus ardent. . . ."¹

¹ "In 1920 only I first heard at Karlsruhe of the super-confessional world religion of the Bahá'is founded in the Orient by the Persian Bahá'u'lláh seventy years ago. It is the true religion of human welfare, without dogmas and priests, uniting all mankind on our small earthly globe. I became a Bahá'i. May this religion live and prosper for the well-being of humanity; this is my most ardent wish."

In the last week of June of 1936, the University of the City of London became the centre of a most brilliant group from all over the world. Here were gathered from every corner of the globe representatives of all the religions of every name, each robed in the colours and vestments of its particular caste and creed. It was the Congress of Faiths, and its object was to exemplify the unity of all peoples and races, and creeds.

Sir Herbert Samuels appeared as a tall, splendid crusader, as he rose with that air of poise and authority which comes from long association with the great chiefs of the Orient. He was High Commissioner of Palestine, and performed his service with distinction. At the Congress he was the chairman of the Bahá'í Day which took place in the second week, after brilliant arguments had been voiced by Buddhists, Moslems, Christians, Hindus and many others. Sir Herbert introduced the first speaker, Arch Deacon Townshend, of Ireland, author of *The Promise of All Ages*, who read a paper sent by Shoghi Effendi. Sir Herbert began: "Of all the religions represented at this gathering for the world Fellowship of Faiths, there is none so well fitted to express the ideal of this Congress as the Bahá'í teaching."

He then gave the principles of Bahá'u'lláh, and a comprehensive short history of the Movement from the first message of the Báb, down to the plan of the New World Order now being put into a living organism by Shoghi Effendi.

On New Year's Day, 1937, in Paris, at a Bahá'í Youth Conference, charming young men and women were gathered from all over Europe. Lydia Zamenoff was reading a paper on the universal language created by her father. What a thrilling sight to see this group of eager youth discussing world problems with the authority of those conscious of a spiritual basis for their plan for order out of chaos.

The Conference took place in the studio of a famous painter. Margarita Barry Orlova, the famous Shakespearean tragedienne, whom Sir Beerbohm Tree called

the greatest Lady Macbeth of her generation, and I were guest speakers.

In the evening the Youth Group was host at a famous restaurant, where at a horse-shoe table the guests were seated in convenient fashion for a specially prepared feast. On my left was seated a brilliant young Persian who is an expert on art, and who is called as a consultant at the museums throughout Europe. We had met before during the summer in Germany, where he was arranging some great art collections at famous institutions.

I was trying to carry on an animated conversation in a sort of diluted French with this interesting person, when lovely Marguerite Wellby sitting opposite, a graduate of the University of London, came to the rescue. I could not help marvelling at the light in her face, with radiant eyes like stars shining with enthusiasm and thrilling with the adventure of assisting at the ushering in of a new civilization. It is this glowing spirit which pervaded this whole party of intelligent young crusaders.

My charming and brilliant friend Madame Barry Orlova was speaking with her inimitable voice: "When I love it is forever—I do not love Monday and hate on Wednesday because I have doubted on Tuesday," she was speaking to a young English bridal pair, "that is why I cannot comprehend people who claim to love God by His Name in the time of Christ and deny Him by another name a few centuries later."

CHAPTER XLVI

WORLD ORDER

DURING the nine winters I spent circling the globe visiting seventy-seven countries on the quest, I found everywhere human beings, groping through the mists of doubt, fear, hate and discord for an unattainable reality. Monarchs, beggars, saints, criminals, industrial tycoons, labourers, militaristic generals and fanatics unwilling to kill a fly—all faced with the same eternal “why” that life had once imposed on me. Despite colour of skin, racial origin, social status, sex—despite the fact that the riddle seemed to one political, to another economic, to a third moral—I saw that all wrestled with the same dilemma. Truly, as Mr. Baldwin said, it is a raving world!

Governments, instead of working in co-operation to solve the common problem, were split by jingoistic nationalism, militarism, economic selfishness, class bitterness, religious and racial antagonisms. Strong nations dominated weaker nations or snarled at each other, like hungry dogs disputing a bone, for the privilege of exploitation. Mental and moral mediocrities wielded the iron claw of dictatorship through fear, illusory promises with their chauvinistic appeals to the mob that resulted in wars—ready to sacrifice the life blood of their subjects to retain their own slipping sceptres.

One thing, however, which may be said in favour of dictatorship is the unquestionable fact that so far as the masses are concerned they have been “*knocked conscious*.” People were like bears hibernating in their holes in winter. One day they were rudely awakened from their torpor by the clattering din outside, which brought them scurrying forth in panic to look around—to find out what the row was all about, only to discover that a

Dictator had suddenly appeared. Since individuals refuse to think, or take a vital interest in their governments or national affairs—what else can they expect? At any rate they have become conscious of and attained to internal solidarity, which may prove one step toward the desired goal, "World Unity," if they live long enough to realize it.

It requires only a slight knowledge of what is going on behind the scenes to realize that another world war, more devastating than the last, threatens to break out in any one of half a dozen focal points. Our present civilization is shrieking in its death pangs. Unless some form of social organization is found to replace our lying competitive order, mankind is doomed.

Humanity in the past has survived similar crises. When the top-heavy, corrupt Roman Empire collapsed under the burden of political, economic and religious problems, the Christian faith came to save Europe. But Christianity to-day is no longer a vibrant force in Western civilization. It has become cut off from the economic and political life and fossilised in the institution of the Church. Christian civilization has reached the same stage as that which Roman civilization had reached at the time of Christ. Once more humanity awaits a new spiritual impetus.

So far as I and hundreds of thousands of Bahá'is all over the world are concerned, that impetus has already appeared in the person of the world-inspiring Educator Bahá'u'lláh. Not only did he come to enkindle new faith among his followers, but to bring a definite plan for a new World Order, which alone can meet the increasing complexities of modern life and save mankind from utter destruction.

What is this plan?

I have already outlined something of its nature and its history. I have already endeavoured to give a brief account of the Forerunner, [the Founder, and his appointed Interpreter, through whom the Bahá'í Faith was first brought to the West.

Speaking in the City Temple, London, in September, 1911, Abdu'l Bahá said :

"This is a new cycle of human power. All the horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise. It is the hour of the unity of the sons of men and of the drawing together of all races and all classes. You are loosed from ancient superstitions which have kept men ignorant, destroying the foundations of true humanity.

"The gift of God to this enlightened age is the knowledge of the oneness of mankind and of the fundamental oneness of religion. War shall cease between nations, and by the Will of God the 'Most Great Peace' shall come: the world will be seen as a new world, and all men will live as brothers."

Where is this "garden of paradise"? asks the sceptic, "among all the agony and strife—where is it?"—The very "agony and strife" are the death-pangs of the old moribund forms, the birth-pangs of the new. The first law of physics states that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time.

A decadent civilization is giving way to the cleansing force of the new. The world is cleft in two—each man must take his stand for one or the other.

Isn't this a repetition of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, every religion? I have been asked this a thousand times from every type of mind.

Truth is one and indivisible. Bahá'u'lláh constantly reiterated the words of all great Prophets, but he has added much that fits the needs of this era which has never been uttered before.

In his own words: "This is the ancient path cleared of debris." For the first time in history both the Spirit and World Administration have been definitely outlined by the Messenger Himself—not a form of ecclesiastical ritual, but spiritual truth applied to the social order.

Evolutionary, not revolutionary, are the processes of this World Administration. If Herbert Spencer said golden conduct could not be expected from leaden instincts, then no political alchemy can make a golden society out of leaden individuals. We watch the desperate drama of the leaders of men struggling to bring order

out of chaos. The greatest efforts by the most idealistic among them are completely frustrated by the warping of their plans to individual interests.

Bahá'u'lláh's World Order is the Golden Age of Man, fore-visionsed since the race began; the long-expected era of Universal Brotherhood.

The starting-point of this Golden Age is the change in the single cell in the social organism, each human being; a change that has been and can only be wrought by the devotion aroused by the inspiration of a divine revelation. Individual consciousness *must* change from egocentric greed to the understanding of what unity, justice and love mean as between human beings in their daily relations. Economic equity, peace, order, educational progress—human happiness, our rightful heritage—will be ours when we are willing to sacrifice our obstinate egoism to the claims of the new civilization.

Built upon this foundation, the Spirit of the New World Order, the outer Form includes:

A threefold world government in the hands of the spiritually enlightened and executively capable among the nations' representatives, untainted by the machinations of any political party or parties.

Starting with the community council of nine, linked to the national and international councils, every member of this World Order becomes an integral part of it, serving altruistically, eligible to vote, eligible to take office. Every person and every problem stands on intrinsic merit and apart from present-day political programmes.

Compulsory education—moral, cultural and vocational training for every human being, Oriental and Occidental, irrespective of race, class, or outlook, male or female. More advanced in His time in a country more backward than the most primitive country of to-day, Bahá'u'lláh advocated the education of girls as of primary importance, for they are the mothers of future citizens. His view was that the limitation of the mother was the limitation of the man. A complete education should make each individual a constructive contributor to the community in which he lives, according to his or her capacity.

Economic equity—the Commonwealth of Man is a phrase in Bahá'í writings distinguished from all other interpretations.

The "common wealth" of man is the natural resources of the earth to which he has applied his labour and intelligence. Behind every exchange medium, whether it be beads or bullion, stands this common wealth. We have mistaken mediums of exchange for wealth itself, and "piled up gold"—frozen assets. However economic experts may scoff at spiritual principles as the preliminary basis of equity, it cannot be denied that a practical sense of the organic unity of the race would go far towards solving the vexed problem of distribution—the whole world would exchange rather than go to war about tariffs. If justice obtained, there would be no exploiters and no exploited. With the universal education programme in force, each individual would give and receive from the community according to his highest capacity.

Such an occurrence as happened this winter at Oslo could easily have been prevented when I was obliged to leave the Grand Hotel one bitter cold morning in search of coffee, after a complete walk-out of all hotel employees in the city. After lugging six pieces of luggage down six flights of stairs I inquired before leaving how long the management would hold out or whether they would meet the strikers' demands. The manager hopelessly announced his doubts as to whether the hotel would ever again open its doors. The employees demanded double wages.

A warning for this anticipated social problem was given decades ago in the adoption of the profit-sharing plan of the New World Order, in which all employees participate even to the smallest unit. Many of the world's most important business concerns have adopted this just economic measure to their advantage.

Taxation is on a justly proportioned sliding scale, and will decrease proportionately when, instead of a continuous scramble in competitive armaments, we can be adequately protected by an internationally maintained police force on land and sea. The cost of this protective

"Peace Army" would be infinitely smaller than can be easily computed, seeing that in case of an aggressive belligerent disturbing the peace, the cost would be divided between all the other nations.

Revenue for education will thus be restored to its proper importance, more funds being available for this purpose. Instead of an eight-hour day it will be incumbent to work for four hours only to provide life's necessities, four hours will be free for vocational, avocational and cultural training.

The inner change of consciousness will also change our attitude of "beating the income tax" into a real sense of true citizenship.

"UTOPIAN," "IMPOSSIBLE," "FANTASTIC"—these are the epithets that have been hurled at my head a hundred times by sceptics.

Very well. Man has a free will. He is challenged to use it to-day as never before. One path, through greed, prejudice, hate, injustice, leads to World Chaos—race suicide, through war, with inevitable economic ruin and starvation following each other in a vicious circle. The other path leads to World Order—race salvation in international co-operation, a civilization never before attained collectively, all-embracing, based on the spiritual qualities of justice, wisdom, knowledge and love.

Must we go through a worse cataclysm than 1914 before we realize the path of human destiny?

The call of the great Persian can be felt reverberating through the entire world. Gradually the New World Order is being established in every one of the seventy-seven countries I have visited.

It was only gradually that I became aware that my own personal problems were part of the larger moral, political and economic problems of the world.

My first thrill at finding in Bahá'u'lláh the answer to the riddle of self has grown with my discovery that this New World Order, which is also a philosophy and a way of living, is a fourth-dimensional answer to the larger riddle of a three-dimensional world.

It is glorious to have found one's self. It is more glorious to be able to identify one's self organically with the great living world, to be able through the power of meditation and prayer to partake of the wealth and creative energy emanating from God, to understand the complex reality in the divine plan which is unfolding, and to see day by day the principles and concepts of this matchless Faith becoming a living part of our political and economic life.

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